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THE JESUS OF OUR FATHERS

Whoso is wise will give heed to these things.
Psalm 107:43.



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THE JESUS OF OUR FATHERS

By

JOHN WALTER GOOD, Ph.D.

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. *John 3:16.*

Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein. *Revelation 1:3.*

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TO MY
COLLEGE STUDENTS IN BIBLE STUDY

1. THESSALONIANS 2:19-20

332118

2. V. D. E. 3-2-34

PREFACE

This book is a study of Jesus Christ. The author has surveyed all the materials of the Four Gospels, in regular order, as a revelation of the Lord Jesus. The inner meaning of the successive passages of the Gospel narrative have been analyzed in an effort to show how the Divine Personality of Jesus is exhibited in all that He said and did, and in all that is said about Him in the sacred Scriptures. The reader's attention is focused, in this study, upon Jesus Himself, Who is self-revealed in His character, and deeds, and teachings, as He lived and labored and taught among men. When questions have been suggested in this study, a definite effort has been made to direct the reader, for correct and adequate answers, to the Word of God. The book is written *toward* the Bible, and not away from it. The supreme purpose of this work is to commend Jesus Christ to the world, and to promote a stronger faith in Him as the Son of God and the Savior of Men.

The genesis of this study dates from the author's childhood. His interest in this subject began, even before he could read, as he listened to the Word of God while it was read at the fireside and at the family altar. Years of study in other fields of knowledge have never diverted his mind from a first interest in the Greatest Book, and in its incomparable revelation of Jesus Christ. In more recent years, the present volume began to take definite form in the classroom, where the author, as suggested in the dedication, first worked out these outlines with college students. The working principle, both in making and in developing these outlines, has always been to see Jesus Himself as He is actually set forth in the Scriptures, and as self-revealed in the successive scenes of His Own Life-Story.

The author has always regarded Jesus Christ as the Son of God, from eternity unto eternity, the divinely commissioned Divine-Human Savior of the world. Therefore this study of Jesus, in as far as it reflects a connected account of His Life-Story, partitions His Saviorship into four major divisions, or

Periods, as they are to be called, which are divided and subdivided as indicated in the Parts and Chapters of this book.

Those major divisions may be described in this way. The First Period of the Lord's Saviorship extends from eternity past down to the beginning of His public ministry. This Period includes the Pre-Existence of the Son of God, and His miraculous Birth, and His human growth to the maturity of thirty years. The Second Period extends from the beginning of His Divine Ministry, at the age of thirty years, through the inauguration and formal propagation of His Kingdom, until it was well established. During this Second Period the Lord Jesus was primarily concerned with the practical problems of self-revelation, the Way of Life, and faith; and with the permanent organization of spiritual results and right standards of life into His Own new spiritual Kingdom in the world.

The Third Period of the Lord's work as Savior was concerned mainly with His Death. This Period extends from the definite turning point of His Life-Work, at the beginning of Part V in this book, to His Death and Burial. Immediately after the Lord Jesus had completed the setting up of His Kingdom in the world, He turned His face steadfastly toward the Cross, which was to be the price and the power by which the practical ends of His Kingdom of life and service should be accomplished in the hearts of men. The Fourth Period extends from the Lord's Resurrection into the future ages, and will extend until the full consummation of His sovereign mission to save and bless and judge the world has been effected.

These major divisions of the Lord's work as Savior may be summarized in terms of the Parts of this book. Thus stated, the larger outline of these Periods is as follows. The First Period is covered by Part I of this book. The Second Period is covered by Parts II, III, and IV. The Third Period is covered by Parts V, and VI. The Fourth Period is covered by Part VII. With this statement in mind, the reader may look at the Table of Contents and see the principal chapter-subdivisions that come under each of these major Periods of the Saviorship of Jesus Christ.

The plan of this book gives to it a combination of interests for the Bible student and the general reader. While the work is more definitely a *study of Jesus* than a connected history of His travels and deeds, yet the history element is not wanting. The Lord Jesus is studied, in His life and ministry, in all of the successive situations of the Gospels in regular chronological order.

The interwoven outline, which gives the parallel references in all of the Gospels, is therefore a complete and detailed Harmony of the Gospels. This feature of the study, it is hoped, will prove to be a valuable part of the work.

Moreover, the general outlines of the book are both topical and logical, the logic being that of the inner significance of the several passages as they are studied in chronological succession. This feature of the work makes of it, in some degree at least, an exposition of the four-fold Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. The many footnotes, biblical and historical, and the copious Indexes, and the several tabulations of Scriptures and other data, should give to this work the added character of a valuable book of ready reference for more general Bible study.

The author has endeavored to make his analysis complete, and his organization of materials clear and definite. He has tried also to write in a style that is clear, direct, and easy to follow at every point. His attitude is that of a conservative in religious thought, whose purpose is to exhibit again, and with helpfulness if possible, those old truths concerning the Lord Jesus as our fathers saw Him, believed in Him, loved Him, and served Him. In these days of many adverse and even hostile views of the Son of God, certainly there is a definite place at this time for this additional testimony to the old, old truth as it is in the Jesus of our fathers.

This book is now offered to the public. It is a contribution, in the field of biblical science, to the literature of Jesus Christ. The book is sent forth with the hope that it may find a wide acceptance with Bible students, that it may be used by some Bible teachers as a textbook in formal Bible classes, and that it may be read extensively by the general public, whose sustained interest in religious literature is a strong evidence that the salt of the earth and the light of the world are both effective in the forward look of the Lord's Kingdom. The work goes forth also with the author's hope and prayer, that it may bring many to know Jesus as their Savior, and that it may enrich every reader with a clearer and more definite knowledge of Him, Whom to know is life eternal.

JOHN WALTER GOOD.

Milledgeville, Georgia
Christmas Day, 1922

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A CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF THE BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Name of Book	Author	Date	Place	Amanuensis	Carrier	To Whom First Sent (Written)
James.....	James.....	45 A. D.	Jerusalem.	(James).		Twelve Tribes Scattered
I Thessalonians.	Paul.....	52.....	Corinth.			Church at Thessalonica
II Thessalonians.	Paul.....	53.....	Corinth.	(Paul, 3:17)		Church at Thessalonica
Galatians.....	Paul.....	57(?)	Ephesus.	(Paul, 6:11)		Christians in Galatia
I Corinthians.....	Paul.....	57.....	Ephesus.	Sothenes?	Titus (2 Cor. 12:17-18)	Church in Corinth
II Corinthians.....	Paul.....	57.....	Achaia	Titus, Luke?		Church in Corinth
Romans.....	Paul.....	58.....	Corinth	Tertius (16:22)	Phebe (16:1-2)	Church in Rome
Matthew.....	Matthew.....	58.....	Jerusalem(?)	(Matthew)		Christians in Palestine
Luke.....	Luke.....	60-62.	Caesarea.	(Luke)		Greek Christians (Universal)
			(Rome)			
Colossians.....	Paul.....	62.....	Rome.	(4:7-9)?	Tychicus	Church at Colossae
Philemon.....	Paul.....	62.....	Rome.	(Paul, v. 19)	Onesimus.	Philemon, at Colossae
Ephesians.....	Paul.....	62.....	Rome.	(6:21, 22)	Tychicus.	Church at Ephesus
Philippians.....	Paul.....	63.....	Rome.	(2:25; 4:18)	Epaphroditus.	Church at Philippi
Acts.....	Luke.....	63.....	Rome (?)	(Luke)		"Theophilus," Luke 1:1-4)
Hebrews.....	Luke? Paul? 64.	64.....	Rome(?)		Timothy?	Probably Universal
I Peter.....	Peter.....	64.....	Babylon.	(Peter)	Silas (5:12)	Christians in Asia Minor
Jude.....	Jude.....	66(?)	Jerusalem(?)	(Jude)		Christians in Palestine
I Timothy.....	Paul.....	66-67.	Macedonia.		Artemus? (3:12)	Timothy, at Ephesus
Titus.....	Paul.....	67.....	Ephesus(?)		Tychicus (4:12)	Titus, in Crete (1:4, 5)
II Timothy.....	Paul.....	67.....	Rome.			Timothy, in Asia Minor
II Peter.....	Peter.....	68.....	Road to Rome.			Christians, in Asia Minor
Mark.....	Mark.....	68.....	Rome.	(Mark-Peter)		Roman Christians (2 Pet. 1:15)
John.....	John.....	90.....	Ephesus.	(John)	{ Local Request of the	All Christians
I John.....	John.....	90.....	Ephesus.	(John)	{ Ephesians.	{ Sent with Gospel of John
II John.....	John.....	91.....	Ephesus.	(John)	(verses 1, 13)	"Elect Lady, her Children"
III John.....	John.....	91.....	Ephesus.	(John)	(verses 1, 14)	"The well beloved Gaius"
Revelation.....	John.....	96.....	Isle of Patmos (John)		(1:1, 4, 9, 11)	Seven Churches in Asia Minor

THE JESUS OF OUR FATHERS

PART I

THE SON OF GOD
BORN INTO THE WORLD

WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?

"The Gospel of God, concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, Who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power." *Romans 1:1-4.*

PROPHECY

"Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign: Behold, a Virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel." *Isaiah 7:14.* "And the Angel answered and said unto her (Mary), 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God For with God nothing shall be impossible.'" *Luke 1:35, 37.*

FACT

"Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the City of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord." *Luke 2:10-11.*

TESTIMONY OF HUMAN EXPERIENCE

"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of Life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal Life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." *1. John 1:1-3.*

TESTIMONY OF GOD

"If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which He hath testified of His Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life; and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the Name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the Name of the Son of God." *1. John 5:9-13.*

SUPREME RESPONSIBILITY

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a Servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name which is above every name: that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the Glory of God the Father. Wherefore, my beloved, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God Which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." *Philippians 2:5-13.*

RESULTS

"He shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, and in the world to come eternal life." *Mark 10:30.*

CHAPTER I

THE PRE-EXISTENT SON OF GOD

"For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." *Malachi 3:6.*

"I am the Son of God." Jesus, in *John 10:36.*

"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." *Hebrews 13:8.*

The Lord Jesus Christ is the unique Personality in all history. His birth was a miracle. Before that event, He was God. In that event, He became Man. Since that event, He has been, and will ever be, both God and Man, in the two distinct natures that constitute the one Person Jesus Christ. He is the Only Begotten of His Father, the Son of God from all eternity. Since that is true, the Lord Jesus Christ is the only possible Savior, the One Hope of the world.*

Jesus Christ was both Divine and Human. That is the first truth of the Gospel. Leading to the Birth of Christ, which came in the fullness of time, there were two lines of history. The one line was divine, leading down from past eternity. Before His birth, from all eternity, the Son of God was with His Father on the Throne of Heaven. The other line was human. In it was traced the lineage of Jesus Christ in human history, from the Creation to His Birth in Bethlehem. Toward His Birth, from the beginning of time, the two lines converged; and in His Birth the Divine and the Human were united in the unique Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Upon these facts, as they are further analyzed in this chapter, are built the Gospel Records of the Life-Work of Jesus Christ the Son of God.

I. Jesus Christ the Son of God

Jesus Christ was the Son of God. This was true of the Child Jesus, Who was conceived of the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary. It was true also of Christ before His Birth. Christ was the Son of God from all eternity. He was a Divine Person, an Eternal Son, co-equal and co-existent with His Father. In His Divine Nature, as the theologians say, Christ is the Son of God by eternal generation. "In the beginning was the Word," by which John meant the Christ; "and the Word was

*This first chapter is as a Prologue to the Life-Work of the Lord Jesus, in the same sense that the last chapter is an Epilogue. The reader might find his interest quickened

with God and the Word was God. The Same was in the beginning with God." Christ Himself spoke of the Glory which He had with His Father before the world was. His eternal Sonship is the central truth in the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the foundation of His Life-Work as the Savior of the world.

1. *The Eternal Sonship of Christ Seen in God's Announcements to the World.* In all the forward look of God's Plan of

Salvation His Son always held a central position: for He was the appointed Savior. "Thou Art My Son; This Day Have I Begotten Thee" "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Those words referred to

an eternal purpose of God, and to its expression in an eternal Gift, which was manifested in the fullness of time. So it was with almost every great declaration that God has made concerning salvation. He has fully recognized the eternal Sonship of Jesus Christ. Frequently He has given that truth particular emphasis.

When the Heavens and the earth were created, the Son of God was there. He was the Creator. He sent His Divine Spirit to

brood over chaos, and organize it into a world. At length God (the word is plural, the Trinity) said, "Let *Us* make Man in *Our* image, after *Our* likeness." The Divine Son had then a part in those deliberations, as the plural idea is so strongly suggested. Of this truth John has left the world no room to

doubt. Concerning Christ John has said, "and without Him was not anything made that was made."

Likewise the Son of God had an active part in making the Plan of Salvation. This plan, when completed, involved a series of three covenants, in all of which, since their first inception in the love of God, Christ has held a central position.¹ When the call was made in Heaven for a Savior to execute the divine Plan of Life, the Son of God replied, "Here am I; send Me."² Again, the Son of God was quoted as saying, from past eternity, "Lo, I come: in the volume of the Book it is written of Me, I delight to

more readily if he should begin to read this book at Chapter II. The better way, perhaps, would be to read this chapter at first hurriedly, and then to return to it, from the end of the book, for more careful study.

¹The three covenants are the Covenant of Works, the Covenant of Redemption, and the Covenant of Grace. See the analysis of these covenants in Chapter XX, Note 6.

²Compare *Isaiah* 6:1-12 with *John* 12:37-41, and note that the Apostle has referred this original passage to Christ in its proper application.

do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart."³ These are but faint echoes of those great transactions; but the evidence is cumulative and strong, that the Son of God did have an important part in those eternal plans of God, already partially reflected, whereby the world may be saved.

The Son of God, in past eternity, was appointed to His place on the Throne with His Father. Gradually this fact was announced to the world. The curtain of time was raised upon a sovereign Christ. Jehovah, the Sovereign Administrator of the ancient covenants, was the Son of God. He declared His everlasting kingship over the world, and ruled with wisdom, power, justice, mercy, and love.

An outstanding announcement of Christ's essential nature and sovereign position from all eternity was heard in His message to Israel by Moses. When the children of Israel in Egypt should doubt the authority and power of Moses to deliver them from bondage, his instruction from the Lord was that Moses should convince them by the assurance that the eternal *I AM THAT I AM* was back of the movement. "Thou shalt say, 'I AM hath sent me unto you.'" "This is My Name for ever." Henceforth this name was accounted very sacred among the Jews. It signified their most exalted conception of the eternal self-existent God. This accounts for the fact that the Lord Jesus so highly enraged His Jewish enemies when He, in a familiar passage of Scripture, applied this sacred descriptive name to Himself.⁴

Christ's eternal Kingship was frequently announced by the Father to His Son. "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever," was an assurance from the Father to the Son. So also were the words, "Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee." These words, which originally had a sequent assurance of universal dominion, were thrice quoted in the New Testament: once, to prove the pre-existence of the Son of God before His Birth in Bethlehem; again, to show Christ's appointment in past eternity to the office of Mediator between God and Man; and a third time, to prove that the eternal Son of God, through His Birth, had fulfilled the ancient covenant of everlasting kingship in the House of David.⁵

³Compare *Psalms* 40:7-8 with *Hebrews* 10:5-9, and note that this passage also was applied to Christ.

⁴Compare *Exodus* 3:14 with *John* 8:58. See also the following prophecies concerning the Christ: *Psalms* 93:1-2; 103:19; *Proverbs* 8:23; *Isaiah* 63:16; *Micah* 5:2; and *Habakkuk* 1:12.

⁵Compare *Psalms* 45:6, 7, 17, with *Hebrews* 1:8-9; and *Psalms* 2:7 with *Hebrews* 1:5; 5:5; and *Acts* 13:32-37.

Twice at the approach of His birth God announced the Coming of his eternal Son, Who was *born into the world*. To Mary, the Lord's Mother, the Angel Messenger from

3. The Son of God as Announced at His Birth into the World Heaven gave assurance of a miraculous conception by the Holy Ghost; of a uniting of God with Man, as signified by the name Jesus, meaning *Jehovah with us*; of a Son that should be recognized as Divine, and called "the Son of the Highest"; of a sovereignty vested in that Son over the House of David

that should endure for ever, and a Kingdom for Him that shall never end. This Child Jesus was to be "the Son of God," Who was thus *coming into the world* in His Human Nature.

God was thus defining the true nature of His pre-existent Son as He should appear among men. The same was true in the more public announcement to the shepherds of Bethlehem, when Christ was born. "For unto you," said the Angel from Heaven, "is born this day in the City of David a Savior, Which is Christ the Lord." Jesus Christ was Divine. No *God* could thus begin to be. That is impossible. So certain is it that the Son of God *was* before He thus *became* also the Son of Man.

In both of the above announcements, God was plainly emphasizing that the two great antecedent lines of history were thus coming together in the Royal Person of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. From all eternity this "only begotten Son" had been "in the bosom of the Father." Since the creation of Adam, there had been developing the lineage of the Son of Man. These two great facts came together in the Birth of Jesus, Who was both Divine and Human. This truth God expressly emphasized when He announced the birth, in the *City of David*, of a *Savior*, Who is *Christ the Lord*. Thus the two lines which had diverged, as it were, from the Throne of God in the Creation and Fall of Man had come together again, with infinite possibilities of redemption, in the Person of Jesus Christ, the Incarnated Son of God.

4. The Son of God as Defined at His Baptism, and His Transfiguration Twice again, at the Baptism of Jesus, and at His Transfiguration, the Father in Heaven gave clear defining announcements of His own eternal Son. In the Baptism, which came at the beginning of the Lord's Life-Work, the Father's announcement was in the nature of a divine introduction to the world. The Baptism also signified the humiliation of the Son of God: for he was baptized into

Matt. 3:17; 17:5

Mark 1:11; 9:7

Luke 3:22; 9:35

Cf. Isa. 42:1

service, into a fulfillment of all law as the Savior of Men.

But the Transfiguration was different. It was private to a few chosen witnesses. It came near the end of Christ's Life-Work, on the eve of His Crucifixion. He talked to Moses and Elijah on that glorified occasion concerning His own death. He connected that experience with the faith of men during the dark hours that were soon to come upon the world. Doubtless this event was a qualifying experience, to support faith in the chosen witnesses, by reminding them that they were to enter the Valley of Shadows with the eternal Son of God. Had they only remembered that fact, they might have watched, with calm assurance, the course of events during the Trials and Death of the Lord Jesus. His Transfiguration was a foretoken of His exaltation: for He was clothed visibly in that hour with the glory that was inherently His from all eternity unto all eternity.

On both occasions the Father in Heaven testified approvingly: "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased." Whether Christ had merely begun His Life-Work, or had practically completed it, there was the same assurance in the Father's heart. The self-consistency of the Divine in Jesus guaranteed the results: for God's eternal Son could not do other than the will of God. But with mere men the case is different. They have human limitations and uncertainties. They must be tried before approval. Even God judges men *after* their deeds are done. Moreover, knowledge heightens responsibility among men. Hence the Father added the command, "Hear ye Him," only after convincing experience with His Son. Thus in these two announcements, God has contrasted the merely human in men with the essential and eternal Divinity that was in His Son Jesus Christ.

2. *The Eternal Sonship of Christ Declared by the Bible Writers.* The pre-existence and eternal Sonship of Jesus Christ

"My Lord and My God" (Thomas)
John 20:28

was strongly emphasized by the Men who wrote the Bible, and especially by those who wrote the New Testament. The exclamation of Thomas, quoted in the margin, was the common thought of those who expressed the faith of that day. Those who wrote the Scriptures had no question in their minds about the true nature of the Lord Jesus. They were ever ready to proclaim Him Divine. And they ever found the true source of His Divine Nature to be His eternal relations with His Father in Heaven. By reference to this truth, as will appear in the following analysis, the Apostles and other writers of the Scriptures explained the Christ Himself, and the Way of Life through Him.

The Bible Writers confessed this truth both as a matter of personal belief, and as the common faith of the Early Church.

1. Eternal Sonship Emphasized in the Faith of the Early Church Peter spoke for himself, and the Apostles, and the Church generally, when he replied to Jesus, saying, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God."⁶ John the Baptist, who profoundly influenced the faith of men

in that day, was very positive in his convictions. Speaking of Christ's eternal nature, John said, "And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God." With equal certainty of faith, John the Apostle testified to the pre-existence and eternal pre-eminence of the Son of God. Paul has also described Christ as "declared to be the Son of God with Power."⁷

With great force, John and other writers of the New Testament contended that faith in this truth was essential to salvation. Men

(1) Such Faith Necessary to Eternal Life must believe that Jesus Christ was, and is, essentially and eternally the Son of God. In support of this truth, John wrote both his

Gospel and his *First Epistle*. Declaring his purpose in the *Gospel*, John said, "But these (selected materials) are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God: and that believing ye might have life through His Name." The same in general was true of *The First Epistle*, which was sent out to the Church with the *Gospel*. This *Letter* was a definition of the saved life. Of his purpose in this message, John has said, "These things have I written unto you that believe on the Name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the Name of the Son of God."⁸

Truth alone can honor Christ. Men must believe in the Divine-Human Savior, the Incarnate Son of God. He alone can save

(2) Such Faith Alone Can Honor Christ sinful men. To be saved, men must honor Christ as the Son of God. This truth, for Christ's own sake, men must believe. In the

Church of the first Christian century, two questions arose that touched the honor of the Lord Jesus. Some doubted His Humanity. They questioned whether the eternal Son of God was actually born into the world, or merely appeared so to men. Some questioned His Divinity. They debated whether

⁶Matthew 16:16, and John 6:69; 11:27. See the discussion of these passages in the chapters below. See also 1. John 4:15; Luke 2:11; Romans 9:5.

⁷John 1:15-34; 1:1; Romans 1:4; Acts 9:20.

⁸John 20:31; 1. John 5:9-13; John 6:67-69; Acts 4:12; Matthew 1:21; Acts 10:43; 1. Timothy 2:3-6; 2. Timothy 1:8-13.

the Man Christ Jesus was actually the Son of God from all eternity, Who had come to the earth, in Human form, from His Father's Throne in Heaven.

On both of these questions, John the Apostle took a strong positive stand. He declared that Jesus Christ was the eternal Son of God, and that Jesus Christ had come in the flesh. Both of these points of faith respecting the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ John declared to be essential to salvation. In this view John stood not alone. With him Peter and Paul were in full agreement. So were other writers, in so far as they touched upon these points of faith. The position taken by John and the other New Testament writers was that accepted generally by the Church. Everywhere and always the satisfying faith of men has been that which alone adequately honors the Lord Jesus. That faith has always begun with the essential truth, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."⁹

By faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, the writers of the New Testament meant more than the mere acceptance of His miraculous Birth, which will be fully described in the next chapter. They did believe that. But their faith in the Divinity of Christ was far more than that. They believed that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, enthroned with His Father, all-powerful and gracious, from all eternity. Everywhere

they insisted upon such faith in and through the position which they assigned to the Son of God, and the prerogatives which they ascribed to Him, before His Birth into the world. The descriptive references that were made concerning Jesus Christ, of necessity, reached back into eternity that was past.

Many examples might be cited of such references in the Scriptures. The Apostle John, looking back into Eternity, saw there the Son of God *with* God, and *as* God, and as the Creator of all things. Paul affirmed that the Son of God brought His essential Divinity with Him into the world: "for in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." The Author of *Hebrews* has described the Christ in past eternity as the

**"We Know That
the Son of God is
Come, and Hath
Given Us An
Understanding"**
1. John 5:20

One "for Whom are all things, and by Whom are all things"; and again, as having dominion over "all things, (which) were put

⁹Besides the references in the last note above, see 1. John 4:15; John 3:16, 36; Acts 3:13; Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:37; and 1. John 4:1-3.

under Him." John the Baptist declared that "the Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hands." Peter, describing Christ's appointment as an Atoning Sacrifice for sin, speaks of Him as "foreordained before the foundation of the world, but . . . manifest in these last times." Paul, in a passage of great strength and beauty, has declared that the pre-existent Son of God was the express image of the invisible God, the absolute Creator and Sustainer of all things in Heaven and in the earth, the Head of the Church, the Source of redemptive grace, and the One in Whom, and under Whom, the unity of the world was and is organized. These statements clearly point to Christ as being in Eternity, before Time began. They argue conclusively that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, and that He had a place on His Father's Throne from all eternity. Concerning this truth, the writers of the New Testament spoke and wrote with very definite confidence.¹⁰

The truth of Christ's eternal Sonship was clearly, and often emphatically, written into the descriptions of His Humiliation.

3. Eternal Sonship Seen in the Descriptions of Christ's Humiliation

In fact, this truth is an integral part of such descriptions. The Son of God was always spoken of as *coming into the world from a previous state of eternal glory*, and never as having begun to be at the time of His Birth in Bethlehem. Always Christ was spoken of as having come down from Heaven to the earth. Always He was thought of as the Son of God Who had also become the Son of Man, for the purpose of carrying out the Plan of Salvation. These descriptions of His Humiliation fall into two groups.

There are the one-way descriptions. These describe only the Humiliation of the Son of God, but always point definitely to His pre-existent glory with the Father in Heaven.

(1) One-way Descriptions of Christ's Humiliation

A typical example of such one-way descriptions is seen in the following words of Paul: "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich." Such also was the meaning of John's memorable statement: "And the Word became Flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; and we beheld His glory, glory as of the Only Begotten from the Father."

John the Baptist also described Christ as "He That cometh

¹⁰John 1:1, 3; Colossians 2:9; Hebrews 2:8-10; John 3:35; 1 Peter 1:20; Colossians 1:13-23; Ephesians 3:6-11; Psalm 33:6; Hebrews 11:3, and many other like passages.

from above," and as "He That cometh from Heaven." Paul likewise, in another passage, contrasting Christ with Adam, declared that "the Second Man (Christ) is the Lord from Heaven." Frequently, in such descriptions, the writers, and those who have been quoted, have magnified the heavenly riches and the glory which Christ gave up in His willing humiliation of Himself in order that He might become the Savior of the world. Always the Scriptures have represented Christ as having emptied Himself of an eternal glory which belonged to Him as the Son of God, and as having descended to the earth from His pre-existent position at the Throne of His Father in Heaven. That truth is prominent in all of the one-way descriptions of the Lord's Humiliation.¹¹

There are also the full-cycle descriptions. These present the Humiliation and also the subsequent Glorification. The entire Gospel Records represent this full-cycle account of the Son of God. Such a full cycle

(2) Full-Cycle Descriptions of Christ's Humiliation and Exaltation

of humiliation and exaltation has been formally outlined by Paul in his *Epistle to the Philippians*, in the passage referred to in the note below. The same cycle is seen also

in the following statement of Paul to Timothy: "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the Flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." Such full-cycle descriptions might be multiplied. In them all one truth has an outstanding emphasis. The writers of the New Testament, and also of the Old, have thought of Christ's Birth into the world, and of His sojourn in the world, as mere incidents in the larger Life-Work of the Lord Jesus Christ, Who was the Son of God from all eternity unto all eternity.¹²

The Mission of Christ was from all eternity. He was sent by His Father into the world. So thought all the New Testament writers. "God so loved the world, that He

4. Eternal Sonship Declared in the Statements about Christ's Mission from Heaven

gave His only begotten Son." These words refer to the whole Mission of Christ, and not merely to His Death on the Cross. They hark back to an eternal Gift. Here is the proof. "In this was manifested the love of

God toward us, because that *God sent His only begotten Son into the world*, that we might live through Him. Herein is love . . .

¹¹See 2. *Corinthians* 8:9; *John* 1:14; 3:31; 1. *Corinthians* 15:47; and compare *John* 17:5, and 24.

¹²See *Philippians* 2:6-11; 1. *Timothy* 3:16; *Acts* 3:13; and *Hebrews* 2:9-10.

that (God) loved us, and *sent His Son* to be the propitiation for our sins. . . . The Father *sent the Son* to be the Savior of the world." In this thought the Bible writers are unanimous. Scriptures might easily be multiplied that argue that the Son of God, in response to an eternal Mission from His Father, came from Heaven as the Savior of the world.¹³

3. *The Eternal Sonship of Christ Confirmed by the Inner Consciousness of His Own Divine and Eternal Nature.* The Son

**"I Speak That
Which I Have Seen
with My Father"**
John 3:30-36; 8:38

of God spoke for Himself. He spoke what He knew personally from an eternal experience with His Father. This was the final testimony in all questions about the eternal Sonship of Jesus Christ. The Lord Himself knew the facts. He declared the nature, and attributes, and perfections of His own Divine Personality. He spoke also, and acted, always in the light of a deeper consciousness that He was the Son of God from all eternity. The Divinity that was in the Son of God was the final authority on His own eternal nature.¹⁴

Jesus Christ, on several occasions, declared His own pre-existence, and did so in such a way as to emphasize Himself as having

**1. Pre-existence
and Eternal Sonship
Declared by Christ**

been with His Father from all eternity. During His Trial, when placed under oath by the High Priest, Jesus was asked whether He was "the Christ, the Son of God." The question had reference to His eternal nature. Jesus replied with the strong affirmative, "Thou hast said." This answer was equivalent to His saying, "Yes, exactly so." At another time, when contending with His enemies about this very question of His own eternal pre-existence, the Son of God said to them, "Before Abraham was, I AM." In this argument, Christ applied to Himself that ancient Name which was used to designate most sacredly the eternal self-existent and almighty God; and the Lord Jesus made this claim to defend His own eternal Nature, and Mission from His Father in Heaven.¹⁵

¹³John 3:16; 1. John 4:9-14; John 1:15, 18, 30. Christ was always thought of as coming from Heaven into the world. He said Himself, "I came down from Heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him That sent Me." (John 6:38). Jesus frequently spoke of His *having been sent*, and of His *coming* into the world. (Mark 10:45; John 6:33; 8:42; 10:10; 16:27-30; 17:8, 25). He also spoke of His *returning* to His Father (John 3:13; 6:62; 20:17). John said, "We know that the Son of God is come." (1. John 5:20); and that He was manifested to destroy the works of the Devil (1. John 3:8). Paul spoke of Christ as "the Lord from Heaven" (1. Cor. 15:47); and he described the full cycle of Christ's coming from and returning to the Father (Note 12 above). Finally, Christ summed up the truth in John 16:28.

¹⁴This conscious Divinity qualified the Lord Jesus for His most humble services. Compare John 13:3.

¹⁵Matthew 26:63-64; Luke 22:69-70; John 9:35-37; John 8:58; Exodus 3:14; and Matthew 22:41-45, with the parallel passages. Christ said that in His Death His char-

The *Jehovah* of the Old Testament was the Son of God, Who was enthroned in Heaven during the Old Testament Dispensation.

Jehovah and Jesus

Jehovah was the Christ, Who thus manifested Himself to the ancient world. The identification is complete in the following statements: for it was one Voice that spoke in both statements. Jehovah announced: "I, even I, am the Lord; and beside Me there is no Savior. . . . Yea, before the day was I am He . . . I am the Lord, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King." Jesus declared: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending. . . . Which is, and Which was, and Which is to come, the Almighty." Both statements were true; for they were the consistent claims of the Son of God in distant dispensations. Christ identified Himself with Jehovah, and with the Messiah-Promises to David. The Lord also spoke of Himself always out of a conscious eternal relation with His Heavenly Father, whether He called Himself *the Son of God, or the Son of Man*.¹⁶

Very often also Christ spoke out of His past experience at the Throne of His Father in Heaven. "In My Father's House are

2. Previous Experience and Eternal Glory Reflected by Jesus Christ

many mansions." The Son of God knew what was there: for He said, "I speak that which I have seen with My Father." Again He said, challenging the faith of Nicodemus, "How shall ye believe, if I tell you of Heavenly things?" The Son of God spoke also of His previous experience of glory, which the Father, out of an eternal love, had bestowed upon His Son in Heaven "before the foundation of the world." Earlier in the same prayer from which these words were taken, the Son of God had prayed this remarkable petition: "And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own Self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." Such language as that quoted in this paragraph derives its only reasonable

acter as the *I AM* should be known. Compare *John* 12:32, and *Matthew* 27:54. See also what happened at the Death of Christ, as analyzed in the later chapters of this book.

¹⁶*Isaiah* 43:11-15; *Revelation* 1:8; 22:13; *Matthew* 22:41-46. Compare *Isaiah* 41:4; and see the Fifteenth Appearance below, in Chapter XXX. See also *Revelation* 3:14, where Christ declared Himself to be "the beginning of the Creation of God."

On Christ's claim to be the Son of God, besides the references in Note 15 above, see *John* 3:16-18; 5:17-18; 5:25; 6:69 (by Peter, as was *Matthew* 16:16; but both were accepted with approval by Christ); 9:35-37; 10:33-36; 11:4; and 20:21 (which states the inspired purpose of John's Gospel). In addition, note these confessions by Christ's friends: *Matthew* 14:33; *Luke* 1:35; *John* 1:34, 49; and also the common attitude of devils in that day: *Matthew* 8:29; *Mark* 3:11; 5:7; *Luke* 4:41; 8:28; and the truth back of the charge of Christ's enemies: *Matthew* 27:43; *John* 19:7.

On Christ as the "Son of Man," see *Mark* 10:45; *Luke* 9:44; 18:31; *John* 12:23; 13:31; and many like passages.

meaning from past experience, which, in these instances, reached back into past eternity, where the eternal Son of God was with His Father.¹⁷

The Lord Jesus let it be known that His entire Life-Work was a reflection of His past experience. He was God; and yet He was consciously working out plans that had been previously agreed upon at the Throne of His Father in Heaven. Christ showed this fact at every turn of His ministry. Often He declared it directly. Always, as He repeatedly affirmed, His teachings, and works, and judgments, were defined as in divine harmony with what He had heard, and seen, and received, in His pre-existent relations with His Father in Heaven.

For example, the entire discourse of Christ, as recorded in *John 5:19-47*, was a powerful reflection of divine transactions that lay in the eternal background of the Lord's Life-Work. Another interesting reflection of that eternal background was heard also in these words of Jesus: "Even so, Father, for so it *seemed* good (note the tense) in Thy sight." The context shows that the reference in those words was to some details in the Plan of Salvation, which had been previously arranged between the Father and the Son. Such statements show that the very Gospel of Christ is itself a proof of His own eternal Sonship.¹⁸

The Son of God always saw the truth of His eternal Sonship, and always acted upon that truth. In His thought always, His Mission as Savior had its origin in past eternity, when He held counsel with His Father. Christ's life and death, His resurrection and ascension, were, as He thought of them, only the means to an eternal end: an end that was pre-determined in the mind of God before the foundation of the world. Christ, in all of His defining thought on this subject, spoke of His Mission to Save as a plan that was pre-arranged in every detail between Him and His eternal Father in Heaven.

This was true of His appointment as Savior. In one passage, Christ has described Himself as "Him Whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world." Thus Christ was *set apart* from all eternity to be the Savior. Therefore He said, "I seek not Mine own will, but the will of My Father Which hath sent Me." That *will of the Father* was therefore

**Christ's Life-Work
a Reflection of His
Eternal Sonship**

**3. Mission as Savior
from All Eternity
Described by Christ**

**(1) Christ's Ap-
pointment as Savior
Described**

¹⁷*John* 3:12; 8:38; 14:2; 17:5, 24.

¹⁸*John* 4:34; 5:17, 19, 27, 30; 7:16; 8:28, 40; 12:44-50; 14:24; and *Matthew* 11:26.

fully defined when the Son of God was commissioned to save. The Son of God was to forego the glory which He had with His Father before the world was. He was to humble Himself; to be born of the Virgin Mary; to live and die for sinful men; to seek and save the lost; and to help the ignorant and sinful to "know the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom (the Father) had sent." That was His Mission, in part at least, as He described it. He came from Heaven, under an eternal command, to do that work.¹⁹

Christ's equipment, as He described it, was adequate for His work. That equipment was appointed to Him by the wisdom and foreknowledge of God from all eternity.

(2) Christ's Equipment As Savior Described Christ's Divine endowments were worthy of God's eternal Son. "All power," said the

Lord Jesus, "is given unto Me in Heaven and in earth." By way of explaining the manner and the authority of this royal endowment, Christ said, "All things are delivered to Me of My Father." This gift of universal power and dominion was not new when Christ spoke of it to His Apostles, and bade them to depend upon Him. No. The Son of God knew by eternal experience the gifts of His Father. By them He had created the world and all things therein. Manifesting Himself as Jehovah, in the Old Testament Dispensation, the Son of God had well proved His power to save and bless, in His saving, guiding, teaching, defending and blessing the ancient children of God. The Son of God, from all eternity, has known His own power: but unfortunately it still remains for the world to learn that He has all power and all authority.²⁰

The volume of materials surveyed thus far needs now no special comment. Three things are clear in these Scriptures, which might be greatly multiplied. It is clear that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was eternally pre-existent before His Birth in Bethlehem. It is further clear that Christ, as the eternal Son of God, was with His Father from all eternity. It is also clear that the Son of God was *sent into the world*, by His Father, to save the lost, whom none but the infinite and eternal Son of God could save. These things lost and sinful men would do well to ponder.

¹⁹John 10:36; 5:30; and 17:3.

²⁰See Matthew 28:18; Luke 10:22; John 10:29-30; Isaiah 9:6-7; Titus 2:13; Romans 8:31-39; I. John 4:4. The Son of God never doubted his Power to save, nor the convincing effects of that power, both in His own external works in the world, and in the inner fruits of it in the lives of men. (John 5:36; 10:38; 17:23; I. Peter 1:5-9; Hebrews 7:24-25).

II. Jesus Christ the Son of Man

The Son of God was also the Son of Man. God's eternal Son became Man in and by His miraculous Birth, as described in the following chapter. Toward this Event the previous general history of the world was bent. To this Event Sacred History looked forward in the covenant promises of God to His People Israel; and from this Event Sacred History looked backward through the genealogies of the Lord Jesus Christ. A double survey needs therefore to be made of the facts that led up to the Birth of Jesus Christ, by which the Son of God became also the Son of Man.

1. *The Son of Man Assured in God's Covenant Promises.*
The Son of God was, from all eternity, appointed to become the Son of Man. This fact was gradually made clear in God's covenant promises to His People, for themselves and for all the world. This unfolding assurance, which kept pace with the progress of history, can be traced here only in a few of the more important covenant promises which God has made.

The beginning in history of all covenants between God and Men was the promise of redemption which was first made immediately after the Fall of Man. That promise was made in general terms, at least so far as recorded. But God, in His infinite mercy, made that promise, even in its recorded form, definite in the one thing then most needed. That thing was an assured hope of a Victor over Sin and Satan. What details God may have then explained that are not recorded, no one now can know.

That First Promise was set in the midst of a judgment upon Sin, and Satan, and Death, the last enemy to be destroyed. The Victor promised was the Lord Jesus Christ, "the Son of God, (Who, in due time), was manifested that He might destroy the works of the Devil." This victory the Lord Jesus was appointed to bring about by an atonement for sin, and by a sanctifying enthronement of His Spirit in the hearts of men, thus justifying sinners before God and purging away the works of evil. That victory, with more or less completeness, has been realized in every generation of the world by those who have believed in the Christ either as promised or as born into the world. The method of de-

**"God Was Manifest
in the Flesh"**

1. Timothy 3:16

**"Thou Art My Son;
This Day Have I
Begotten Thee"**

Psalms 2:7

Hebrews 1:5

1. **First Promise:**

Seed of Woman

Shall Bruise

Serpent's Head

Genesis 3:15

1. John 3:8

1. Cor. 15:26

Romans 16:20

liverance has always been a process of inward victory over sin. Hence Paul, seeing the progress of grace in the Christians at Rome, encouraged them to hope that "the God of Peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." That is the meaning, for all the world, of this First Promise of Redemption.

This original promise became a definite covenant between God and Abraham, in whose Seed, as it was assured, "shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Thus the

2. Covenant with Abraham: "In Thy Seed Shall All Nations be Blessed"

Genesis 12:2-3;

17:1—18:15;

22:16-18

John 8:56, 58

Acts 3:12-26

Galatians 3:1-29

Victor, as promised in this covenant with Abraham, became a Redeemer and Universal Benefactor. Gradually it became clear that this Victor over Sin should Himself be a Divine Person, Who should be born into the world, and become a sacrifice for sin. Doubtless these truths, which were later set down in the Scriptures for all to read, were at this time fully explained to Abraham. The Angel

Messenger who promised the son Isaac spent a good part of the day with Abraham; yet only a few sentences of their conversation have been recorded. Probably this Messenger led Abraham to see, foreshadowed in the un-natural birth of Isaac, the miraculous Birth of the promised Messiah. Likewise, Abraham was probably led later to see that the sacrifice of Isaac, and his rescue by the Angel of the Lord, foreshadowed the Death of Christ on the Cross, and His Resurrection from the dead.²¹

This Covenant Promise to Abraham was renewed to Isaac, and to Jacob.²² Since that time, this promise has been the touchstone of Israel's hope of the Messiah, and of the Christian's faith in Christ. Paul identified this promised Seed with Christ, by pointing out that God said, "not, '*And to thy seeds,*' as of many; but as of one, '*And to thy Seed,*' which is Christ."²³ There can be no reasonable doubt, it would seem, that Abraham, through this promise, foresaw the Son of God, and probably foresaw Him also as the Son of Man. Christ seems to have suggested such an understanding on the part of Abraham, when He said to the

²¹On these facts of Isaac's birth as related to the Birth of Christ, compare *Genesis* 18:9-15, with *Hebrews* 11:11-12, and *Luke* 1:35-37; and also with the content of Chapter II in this book. On the facts of Isaac as related to the Death of Christ, compare *Genesis* 22:1-18, with *Hebrews* 11:17-19; and also with *Hebrews* 2:9-18; *Philippians* 2:7-9; and *2. Corinthians* 5:18-21.

²²*Genesis* 26:1-5 (*Romans* 9:7); and 28:10-14.

²³See *Galatians* 3:1-29, especially verse 16. This Promise to Abraham was further identified with the Lord Jesus Christ as its fulfillment by Matthew and Luke, in their respective genealogies of Christ—see below in this chapter; by Mary, the Mother of Jesus (*Luke* 1:46-55); by Zacharias (*Luke* 1:67-75); by Peter (*Matt.* 16:16; *Acts* 3:19-26); by Paul (*Romans* 4:13-25; *Galatians* 3:16); by the Writer of *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (2:14-18); and by Christ Himself (*John* 8:56-58; cf. *Matthew* 22:41-46).

Jews, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day: and he saw it, and was glad." The Writer of *Hebrews* has stated that Abraham and others saw the Promises "afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them." Doubtless Abraham was widely instructed in the things of Christ: for these records in *Genesis*, which are obviously a summary, have closely paralleled many essential points in the Life-Work of the Divine Savior.

The Appointed Victor over sin was to be a Sacrifice for sin. This truth was further emphasized in the strong public symbolism of the Mosaic Ritual. Every sacrifice in Israel pointed to the Incarnation of the Son of God, Who, in due time, should be made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death. The sacrifices pointed definitely to Jesus of Nazareth, Who was both the sacrificial Lamb of God, and the Mediatorial Priest at the Altar of Eternal Redemption. Jesus Christ gave His own life a ransom for many. He redeemed, with His own precious blood, all those who believed in Him.²⁴

The sacrificial character of Christ was thus emphasized in the Writings of Moses. To this was added another emphasis. The Christ of Promise was appointed also to be a Great Prophet, a Teacher of Israel. Of the Christ, as respects this aspect of His character, Moses Himself was the Type in ancient times. Therefore Moses was commissioned of God to assure Israel, saying to them, "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto Him shall ye hearken." This promise was precious to the heart of Israel. This hope, as given through Moses, became current in the expectation of the Jews from generation to generation. It was so in the time of Christ: for some, in His day, perhaps speaking wiser than they knew in truth, identified Him with "that Prophet," for whom they had looked in Israel since the days of Moses.²⁵

The Promised Savior, in the Covenant which God made with David, became a Royal Person. He was declared to be *The Messiah*, the *Lord's Anointed*. He was seen to be clothed with

²⁴See Chapter XXX, pages 718-725.

²⁵On Christ as a Prophet, see Chapter XXX, pages 715-718. On the expectation current in His day, see *Matthew* 1:13; *John* 1:21; 4:25; and 6:14. On the identification of Jesus with "that Prophet" who was expected, see *John* 1:45; 6:14; *Acts* 3:22-24; 7:37. Some in this way accounted for the mighty works of the Son of God. See *Matthew* 16:14; *Mark* 8:28; *Luke* 7:16; 9:19; 24:19; *John* 3:2; 9:17. This faith was so strong with respect to Christ, that it greatly hindered His enemies from carrying out their evil plans at times. See *Matthew* 14:5; 21:26; and *Mark* 11:32.

sovereign authority, and to have assigned to Him a Kingdom that should never end. It was made clear to all that the Savior Who

4. **Covenant with David:** "I Will Establish the Throne of Thy Kingdom For Ever"

2. Samuel 7:4-17

1. Kings 2:1-4

Jeremiah 33:14-26

had already been promised repeatedly was to be an eternal King, a truth which had been previously suggested in the Writings of Moses. The Lord, speaking through the Prophet Nathan, said to David: "Thine House and thy Kingdom shall be established for ever before thee; thy Throne shall be established for ever." The reference then,

as doubtless David understood, pointed definitely to the Kingship of the Lord Jesus Christ.

By this cumulative unfolding of the truth, the character of the promised Son of Man was made known to all the people. The Victorious Seed of the Woman was gradually seen by all to be of the nationality of Abraham; of the Tribe of Judah; and of the House of David. This Savior was to be a Victor over sin, and a universal Benefactor of the nations. As such, He was appointed to act in the capacity of Priest, and Prophet, and King for ever. All of these facts pointed then to the Christ of Promise, and all are being fulfilled in Him to-day.²⁶

The later Prophets, under Divine direction, kept these hopes alive in Israel, and added many other details concerning the Lord

5. **Promises through the Prophets:** the Savior a Divine Person

Isaiah 7:14; 9:6

Jeremiah 23:6

Matthew 1:18-25

Jesus Christ, and His Coming into the world. Through the Prophets God emphasized, among many other truths, that the Victorious Seed of the Woman should be a Divine Person. It was pointed out definitely that His Birth should be a miracle, and that His Name should be *Immanuel*. He was to be

"*God with Us*." He was to be "*Jehovah Our Helper*." He was to be called "*the Mighty God*," and "*the Lord Our Righteousness*." Through these assurances, and many others by the mouth of the Prophets, God prepared the way for the world to see that the Son of God had become also the Son of Man when the Lord Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem.²⁷

²⁶See *Genesis* 49:10; *Psalms* 89:18-52; 110:1-7 (cf. *Matthew* 22:41-46; and on the royal Priesthood of Christ, *Hebrews* 5:6, and 7:17); 132:10-12; *Isaiah* 55:2-3; *Jeremiah* 23:5-6; *Micah* 5:2; *Luke* 1:30-35; 2:10-11; *John* 7:42; *Acts* 2:25-26; *Romans* 1:3-4; and 2. *Timothy* 2:8. See also the last chapter in this book.

²⁷See *Isaiah* 7:14 (*Matthew* 1:23); 9:6; *Jeremiah* 23:6; 33:16 (*1. Cor.* 1:30, and *Romans* 5:18); *Philippians* 2:7 (*Zech.* 3:8).

In all ages the Prophets recognized Jehovah (the Christ) as enthroned in Heaven with supreme power and authority. They knew that the eternal Son of God was pre-existent, and was appointed to be a Divine Redeemer. They knew that the Son of God, even in the earliest times, was active in their interests; and that He was yet to appear on the earth, in His Humanity, as the vicarious and only Savior. They

2. *The Son of Man Defined in the Completed Genealogies of the Lord Jesus Christ.* The Human Nature of the Son of God

"Remember . . .
Jesus Christ of the
Seed of David"

2. Timothy 2:8

Romans 1:3-4

was assured, through the repeated covenant promises, from the First Promise of victory and redemption after the Fall of Man. God, in His foreknowledge and mercy, gave to the ancient world an increasingly clear forward look toward the Birth of His Son into the world, so that the world might understand, and believe, and have spiritual life. In the beginning of the Gospel of Christ, God has reversed this former prospect of the promises, and has given a backward view of the centuries during which those ancient promises were coming to their fulfillment. In this retrospect God has set forth a strong ground for faith in Christ in the survey of the completed Genealogies by which, as was promised, the Son of God, in the fullness of time, became also the Son of Man.

There were two of these Genealogies, the one made by Matthew, the other by Luke. These Genealogies are not alike, but diverge the one from the other in four principal respects. Two of these points of difference, as will appear in the sequel, are of very great importance, and the other two have considerably more than ordinary interest.

1. Two Divergent Genealogies of Jesus Christ

These Genealogies differ, first, in point of the method of presentation. Matthew has traced the lineage in a forward way down to Joseph, the husband of the Virgin Mary. Luke has traced the lineage backward from Jesus to Adam and to God. The Genealogies differ, therefore, in the second place, in respect to the origins which they assign respectively to the lineage of Jesus. Matthew began with Abraham, the national father of the Jewish People. Luke looked backward upon the origin in God Himself.

The two Genealogies differ, further, in respect to many of the names given in the two genealogical lists. Several explanations

described His Birth as miraculous, and His birth-place as the ancient City of David. They discussed the Lord's sufferings, death, burial, and resurrection. They pointed out John the Baptist as the Forerunner of Christ. They said that "the Lord, Whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His Temple, even the Messenger of the Covenant, Whom ye delight in." They heralded His challenge to the world for faith. They closed their age-long message with the assurance that the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings for them that believe, and called for a general turning to the Lord, that men may be blessed, and not cursed, for ever more.

See Job 19:25; Psalms 2:12; 19:14; 22:1-31; 24:1-2; Malachi 3:1 (Matthew 11:10); Isaiah 7:14; 9:6; Micah 5:2 (Matthew 2:6); Isaiah 41:14; 53:1-12; 59:20; 63:7-9, 16; Jeremiah 50:34; Hosea 13:4, 14; Haggai 2:4-9; Malachi 4:1-6 (Luke 1:76-79); Daniel 9:22-27. Read also Luke 10:23-24; 24:26-27; Acts 7:52; 1. Peter 1:10-12; Hebrews 11:13; Acts 2:16-21; 3:20-24; Hebrews 4:1-2; and Revelation 22:16-17.

of these differences have been offered.²⁸ The hypothesis accepted in this discussion points to the fourth difference between the two Genealogies: namely, that Matthew has here given the genealogy of Joseph, whereas Luke has probably given that of Mary, since both of them were of the House and Lineage of David. The significance of these several points will appear in the following discussion.

The two Genealogies, viewed in an external manner, present the following points of agreement and divergence. Luke's Genealogy, looked at in a forward view, comes down from God through Adam to Abraham alone, Matthew not being represented in this extended period. Then the two Genealogies are exactly parallel from Abraham to David. After David, the two lines diverge. Matthew's list of names follows from Solomon, probably in the legal or royal line, to Joseph, the husband of Mary. Luke's list follows from Nathan, another son of David, probably in the natural line, to Jesus through Heli, who was, in all probability, the father of the Virgin Mary.

The two lines had, however, come together twice after David and before reaching Joseph and Mary. The two lines, in this interval, converged first in Shealtiel and his son Zerubbabel, probably by adjustment of the royal line as suggested in note 28 above. After this, the two lines diverged again through different sons of Zerubbabel, and re-united next, as it seems, in Matthan, as the name is given by Matthew (1:16), or Matthat, as the same name (supposedly) is given by Luke (3:24).²⁹ This Matthan, according to Matthew, was the grand-father of Joseph; and the Matthat of Luke was the father of Heli, and therefore probably the grand-father of the Virgin Mary. Joseph and Mary would seem therefore to have been near akin, probably first cousins.

²⁸Any hypothesis upon which these differences may be harmonized or explained should satisfy the Bible reader. The more common hypotheses suggested are as follows. (1) by supposing one or more levirate marriages, in which the widow of an elder brother was taken by a younger brother, and the children of this second union were regarded as the legal heirs of the elder brother. (See *Genesis* 38:8; *Deuteronomy* 25:5-10). This custom was still current in the time of Christ. (*Matthew* 22:24-26). (2) By supposing that Matthew has given the legal or royal line of Joseph from Solomon, while Luke has given the natural line of Joseph's descent from Nathan, another son of David (2. *Samuel* 5:14; 1. *Chronicles* 3:5). This supposition would require some adjustments, as in the case of the failure of the royal line in King Jechoniah (*Jeremiah* 22:30), where the legal right was transferred to Shealtiel, a descendant of David from his son Nathan. Thus it is held by some Bible students that, under (1) or (2), or both perhaps, the two lists of names, as the genealogy of Joseph, although greatly complicated, may yet be entirely accurate. (3) by supposing, as seems to have been the case in fact, that Matthew has given the genealogy of Joseph, while Luke has given that of Mary.

²⁹Some have supposed other points of identity in the two lists of names, but these suppositions are of minor importance. Much has been written on these Genealogies; but the essential points in the more important views are usually given in the Commentaries on *Matthew* and *Luke*, and with greater fullness in the Bible Dictionaries.

The two Genealogies were compiled separately by Matthew and Luke, from authoritative records accessible alike at that time

**(3) Independent
Composition of
the Genealogies**

to these writers and to the general public. Such records were then kept with care by almost every Jewish family, and no doubt with very great care by all of the few branches of the House of David because of the Divine Promise vested in that House.³⁰ Nowhere is there a record that the integrity of these two Genealogies was in that day called into question, not even by the most inveterate enemies of Christ's Kingdom. Moreover, the evident independence of Matthew and Luke the one of the other in the making of these divergent yet authentic Genealogies greatly strengthens confidence in the integrity of them both, however their differences are to be explained or harmonized.

Matthew introduced his Genealogy with this first statement of his Gospel: "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham." Thus Matthew formally announced his purpose to give the *official royal* lineage of Jesus Christ as the Promised Messiah of Israel. That Matthew did in his presentation of the Gospel message to the Jews. He tried to anchor a national faith, first, in the official lineage of Jesus Christ as coming directly from Abraham and David.

For purposes of conviction, Matthew, in his first fruitful words of introduction, looked both ways in history. Backward in the past, his thought linked the Lord Jesus immediately with the national and international promises in the Covenant made with Abraham, and with the royal inheritance of the Messiah as it was vested in and typified by the House of David. Forward in time, with the assurance of faith, Matthew saw, in Israel and beyond Israel, the national and international blessings of the Promised Messiah fully realized in Jesus Christ, but in Him only as a Sovereign Savior, and under the correlative conditions of recog-

³⁰Compare the extended genealogies in 1. and 2. Chronicles, and those made in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. Many such records, official and private, were easily accessible among the Jews in the time of Christ, though most of them perished in the Fall of Jerusalem and the Dispersion of the Jews. Hillel, the renowned teacher, who rose from among the common people of that day, could prove, from extant records, his own descent from the House of David. Other similar instances of such records have been mentioned in history. In this connection, it is important to remember that Luke (1:1-4) has emphasized the great care with which he examined the accuracy of such records in as far as he used them as the sources of his Gospel. See Chapter II, Note 5, on Hillel.

niton, acceptance, and loyal allegiance on the part of those who should enjoy the Messianic blessings.³¹

That is the way Matthew began his Gospel of the Christ. The reason is easy to understand. Matthew wrote immediately for

**(2) Jesus Christ
and the Promises
of Israel**

the Jews. He selected and arranged his materials, as it seems with some degree of liberty, for the purpose of personal and national conviction. His first desire was to

show the Jews that Jesus Christ was in full line officially for the high position and function of Messiahship because of His right and unbroken lineage from Abraham, and His royal lineage from the House of David, and further, as will appear below, from His Divine Nature as the Son of God. The human side of this Messianic truth Matthew presented by tracing the Covenant Line of the ancient Promises, through its male descendants, as the legal and official lines of descent were traditionally counted among the Jews, directly and officially, from Abraham and David to Joseph, into whose household Jesus was born.

Thus Matthew presented the royal and official lineage of Jesus Christ as the Messiah of Promise. But Matthew formally and

**(3) Divine Father-
hood of Jesus Christ
Matthew 1:1, 16,
18-25**

emphatically made it clear that this lineage which he had given did not pass *through Joseph* to Jesus. This fact Matthew made very clear when he stopped this line of descent with Joseph, and discontinued the

use of the verb *begat* with the statement that "Jacob begat Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, Who is called Christ."

This historic royal lineage of Jesus was thus traced, as the actual human channel of the Savior's Birth, down to Matthan (*Matthew 1:16*), who was the grand-father of Joseph. That fact brought this lineage to a point within the personal knowledge of those who lived at the time of the Lord's Birth. Further statement for them was unnecessary: for the matter was perfectly clear. Thus, within the knowledge of that generation, Joseph was side-stepped in the Genealogy of Jesus *as not a real ancestor of Jesus*. Joseph was the male heir in the royal line of the favored household; but Joseph was not the father of Jesus. That fact Matthew has made very clear; and in this point, as will be observed (*Luke 3:23*), there is exact agreement between Matthew and Luke, who has traced the human channel of the Lord's Birth backward in history through the ancestry of Mary.

³¹See *Genesis* 12:3; 22:18; 2. *Samuel* 7:12-16; *Psalms* 89:3; and 132:11.

Matthew's meaning at this point is clear, definite, and very important. From the first he desired to have it understood that Jesus Christ was in the Covenant line of Abraham, and in the Royal line of David, and that Jesus was also the Son of God, the Divine-Human Messiah of Promise. The first two of these facts Matthew made very clear, at least to that generation of his readers, in his statement of the Genealogy of Jesus.³²

Matthew, in order to make clear the third fact, the Divine origin of Jesus, and to explain the side-stepping of Joseph from the Genealogy at this point as not the father of Jesus, gave at once a circumstantial account of the miraculous Birth of Jesus, and of Joseph's true relations to that supernatural event. That explanation was both clear and complete. This statement also completed logically Matthew's introduction to the Jews of their Divine-Human Messiah, Who had appeared among them in the Person of "Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham," and also the Son of God.³³

Luke traced the lineage of Jesus Christ from Jesus, backward in history beyond David, Abraham, and Adam, to God Himself.

3. Genealogy by
Luke: Jesus Christ
the Savior of
All the World
Luke 3:23-38

Matthew presented the Messiah-Christ to the Jews, eight times calling Him the "Son of David." But Luke has presented the Lord Jesus to the international Greek world of that day as the Universal Savior, the Son of God, and yet the Son of Man, "the partaker of a common humanity with man, and, therefore, the kinsman

³²But how is it clear now that Jesus was of the Royal House of David? Matthew has made that matter practically definite in this way. In the first verse of his Gospel, Matthew has said that "Jesus Christ (was) the Son of David." In that first chapter, and the sixteenth verse, Matthew has said that Jesus was not the son of Joseph, albeit Joseph himself was a "son of David." Then it follows that the Lord's sonship to David cannot, according to Matthew, have come through the natural line of fatherhood in Joseph, whose lineage Matthew has described as complete from Abraham and David to Joseph. The Lord's sonship to David must, therefore, have come through His Mother Mary, whose lineage (well known in that day) Matthew had traced in one line, and touched in the other, in the person of Matthan, and that, too, at the very point where Matthew began to side-step the royal male line in Joseph to make room for the Divine Fatherhood of Jesus.

Moreover, this set of facts, it will be observed, also agrees exactly with Luke's direct line of Mary's descent from David: that is, if the Matthan of Luke is the same person as the Matthan of Matthew, and this supposition is generally accounted correct. The logic of these facts and probabilities is very strong, if not indeed irresistible. The conclusion is this. Matthew has given the official royal lineage of Joseph, and has *all but said* in so many words that Mary was also of that same royal line, a fact easily known in that generation.

Since both Matthew and Luke have side-stepped the natural fatherhood of Joseph as applied to Jesus, there can be no reasonable doubt about the Virgin Mary's being of the royal House and lineage of David. See *Psalm 132:11; Isaiah 11:1; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Micah 5:2; Matthew 21:9; 22:42; Luke 1:32; 2:4-5 (almost positive); 2:10-11; John 7:42; Acts 2:30; Romans 1:3 (very definite); Revelation 3:7; and 22:16.*

³³*Matthew 1:1-17 and 1:18-25* are complementary statements, each explaining the other. As parts of Matthew's introduction of Jesus Christ, the two passages may not be separated the one from the other without doing violence to the truth as Matthew would have it understood.

Redeemer of the human family, without respect to national distinctions or the ancient separation of Jews and Gentiles—the Author of a common salvation for lost sinners everywhere—the Savior of the world.” Yet Luke first presented his universal Gospel to the Gentile mind of the pagan Greek world.

Therefore this first important truth. Matthew and Luke wrote their respective Gospels to different peoples, and from different points of view. The ultimate purpose of

**(1) Apperceptive
Approaches of
Matthew and Luke
Contrasted**

both writers was the same: for it is clear that God intended, through Matthew’s message and its conviction of the Jews, to universalize the Kingdom of Christ. But im-

mediately the two writers had the problem of delivering their respective messages to entirely different readers, who had to be approached in terms of their own past experience and consequent apperceptive preparation for receiving the wonderful message of the Gospel of the Divine Savior. This law of the human mind, the law of understanding in the light of past experience, both writers have observed with care; and each writer has approached his readers at a point of contact that is, in the case of each Gospel message, both definite and significant, as the further discussion will show.

The reader has doubtless noticed that many things in *Matthew* and in *Luke*, as respects the method of presentation, are exact opposites, though never in point of fact contradictory. This circumstance is accounted for very largely by the care with which the two writers have observed the law of apperceptive contact with the minds of their respective readers. It is their respect to this law that explains a matter so large as the order in their larger outlines in the presentation of historic materials, and the consequent different positions of the two Genealogies in their respective Gospels. Matthew began with his Genealogy, in the first chapter, and after that gave an account of the supernatural Birth of Jesus. But Luke has reversed this order, putting his Genealogy in his third chapter. The cause of this difference is a matter of some importance in its bearing upon the two Genealogies now under consideration.

Matthew wrote for the Jews, who were familiar with the Scriptures and the ancient traditions of the true God of Heaven. The Jews knew the covenant promises of God, and expected their Messianic Hope to be fulfilled in the course of human generations. Hence Matthew approached them with his Gospel message exactly at that point, beginning with the Genealogy of

Jesus Christ, and later adding thereto the exalted conception of His miraculous Birth, and His consequent Divine Nature, albeit the Jews were not without light on this latter truth also.

But in Luke's *Gospel*, the order of presentation is exactly the opposite, and for this reason. Luke was presenting the facts of Jesus Christ to a Gentile world, which was ignorant of Israel's light and truth, but which was, nevertheless, thoroughly imbued with two religious ideas. The one was the idea of the *sons of the gods*. The other was the idea of *national divinities*. Luke began his Gospel, therefore, exactly at the point of these ideas in the minds of his readers. He presented first, and in great circumstantial and explanatory detail, the supernatural Birth of Jesus Christ the Son of God. This first truth the Gentile readers were at least partially prepared to apprehend: for they had an idea, pagan though it was, of the *sons of the gods*.³⁴

But Jesus Christ was not merely *a son* of the gods: He was *the only begotten Son of His Father in Heaven*. Christ's Birth was unique in its truthfulness in all history. The very nature of it was different from the pagan conception. Speaking generally, His miraculous Birth was the one true fact of its kind. Hence Luke set forth the Divine Birth first, and then linked that event with the One True God, and traced out the one human channel through which God had brought the realization of that unique fact into the world. That channel Luke traced backward to God in the lineage which He had established in His chosen People Israel.

But at the point of a national lineage Luke came into contact with the other current pagan conception, that of *national divinities*. This pagan idea was an obstacle which had to be overcome in the presentation of the Gospel message. The Jehovah-Christ was not a Jewish national god, but the Divine Savior of the world. To avoid any misconception at this point as to the true Nature of the Christ, Luke followed two lines of effective presentation in his Gospel to the Greek world.

First, Luke traced the lineage of the Lord Jesus, far beyond the Abrahamic origin of the Jewish Nation, back to the Universal Father of All. Thus Luke universalized the connections of Christ, lifting them above the thought of national boundaries, and thus divesting them of all distinctions between Jew and Gentile. Furthermore, Luke denationalized the lineage of Jesus, as far as such could be possible, by tracing it, contrary to Jewish custom, through the generations of Israel, in the line of Mary.

³⁴See Chapter XXII, Note 27.

the Lord's Mother, and not in the official male line of Joseph. The effect of this diversion upon the thought of the ancient world would have been greater by far than the mind of the modern world can easily appreciate.³⁵

There was a further reason for Luke's giving the lineage of Mary instead of that of Joseph. This will appear from a con-

sideration of the different working aims of (2) **Working Aims of Matthew and Luke Contrasted** Matthew and Luke in the writing of their respective Gospels. The purpose of Matthew was to convince the Jews concerning the Christ, and through their faith to reach beyond that nation to the Gentile world. But the working aim of Luke, as expressly stated in his Preface to the *Gospel of Luke* (1:1-4), was the desire and effort *to set down facts as they were*, and in their universal connections and significance.

Luke was the *exact historian*. He has told exactly Who and What the Christ was. Luke saw Jesus as related to the universal Fatherhood of God, and to the universal brotherhood of man. Luke reflected the international significance, which is the ultimate true significance, of the Covenant which God made with Abraham. Luke understood that Jesus the Savior was "the Glory of His People Israel," but more than that, and in some sense before that, Jesus was "a Light to lighten the Gentiles." Luke read aright the larger conception of the Prophets: that God's purpose in Israel was far greater than merely to save and bless one small nation.³⁶

Luke, more perhaps than any other man of that day, except the Apostle Paul, with whom Luke was closely associated, saw that the Promised Messiah was not to be a national Jewish God or Savior only, but that the Jehovah-Christ was to be the international "Servant of the Lord," the Chosen Nation being, not an end in itself, but a means under God for world salvation, world Kingdom, and world blessedness. Luke, with correct understanding, heard the Prophets declare the miraculous Birth of Christ, the Divine Fatherhood, and the Virgin Motherhood of Jesus. Luke saw these mighty meanings "accurately from the first"; and, with the highest instincts of the exact historian, Luke has set down these things in his Gospel because they were facts. He wrote that the world "might know the certainty" of the facts of the Christ.

³⁵The ancient status of woman was such that she scarcely counted in public life, as the world thought. Her genealogies were given only incidentally and as related to men. Perhaps this fact accounts in part for Luke's assertion of great care in examining the record-sources of his Gospel. (*Luke* 1:1-4).

³⁶See *Isaiah* 49:6; 42:1; 41:8-9; 44:21; 49:3; and 53:11.

Following this high purpose of Luke, the reader is confronted with an inference that is both compelling and important. That inference is this: that Luke should have exercised this same scrupulous care for exactness of facts in his presentation of the Genealogy of Jesus. That seems to be exactly what Luke has done. Luke knew that Jesus was the Son of the Virgin Mary, and not of Joseph; and it was to be expected that Luke, with exactness of fact, would have traced the lineage of Jesus through the line of Mary, and not that of Joseph.

That, apparently, is what Luke has done. Exactly as Matthew, in the last stages of his Genealogy, side-stepped Joseph in the natural generations in order to make room for the exact facts of the Divine Fatherhood of Jesus, so did Luke, as seems clear from the record, in the very first statement of his Genealogy, side-step Joseph, as not in the lineage of Jesus, in order to give, through the lineage of Mary, the exact facts of the Savior as the Seed of the Woman,³⁷ and thus to connect, even beyond the covenants with David and Abraham, the Lord Jesus with the first and universal Hope of Humanity.

Thus Luke, with exact historical truth, has connected Christ with the first great promise of a Victor over sin. Incidentally, this Genealogy of Mary passes through David and Abraham. Jesus, born in the City of David, was emphatically, in the thought of Luke, the Messiah of Israel. But Jesus, as Luke saw Him,

³⁷The view that Luke has given the Genealogy of Mary, and not that of Joseph, is further supported by the following arguments:

(1) It is said that, in *all* of the older authorities, in the original Greek, *all* the names in Luke's list, except that of Joseph, are preceded by the Greek article *Tou*, meaning of *the*. No such article appears before the name of Joseph, a fact that shows that his name was not linked in the regular line of the other names. This circumstance is held to show that the real genealogical line passes from Jesus to Heli, who is mentioned in the Talmud as being the father of the Virgin Mary.

(2) The mention of Jesus as the "son of Heli," raises no very great problem; neither does the omission from the list of the name of Mary. It was a matter of frequent occurrence among the Jews, that a man was spoken of as the son of his grand-father. (Compare *1. Chronicles* 8:1, and 3, with *Genesis* 46:21; and *Ezra* 5:1, and 6:14, with *Zechariah* 1:1, and 7.) The omission of Mary's name may be accounted for from the fact that the mentioning of a mother's name in such a list was not, generally speaking, in accord with ancient sentiment. The Jews especially, if possible, counted their genealogies in the male lines. Moreover, Luke may have thought it enough to mention Joseph as representative of that first generation, and then to glide back into the direct line of Mary.

(3) Furthermore, it is difficult to discover any reason for Luke's giving the genealogy of Joseph after he has ruled Joseph out from among the ancestors of Jesus. Matthew, writing for the Jews, had a strong reason for following the royal line of David to Joseph. But what reason could Luke, the exact historian, writing for a Gentile world, have had for tracing an unreal and untrue genealogical line which he had already set aside? After he has side-stepped Joseph, the right way to attribute consistency and reasonable meaning to the work of Luke at this point, especially in the light of his own prefatory statement about facts (*Luke* 1:1-4), is to understand that he has, in this Genealogy of Jesus, given the correct lineage of Mary, the Lord's Mother.

was more than that. Jesus Christ was the Divine-Human Savior of the world, the one true Son of God, born into the world as the first and the last Hope of Mankind.

The Christ, as presented in Luke's *Gospel*, belongs to no race and no nation, but to all races and all nations. As the Seed of the Woman, and springing ultimately from the universal Fatherhood of God, Jesus Christ was universal, in some sense, even on the side of His Human Nature. As Luke saw the Divine meaning of the Gospel facts, the Lord Jesus sustains a potential relation of equal hope to all the world. That is the meaning of Luke's Genealogy of Jesus Christ, a meaning that is evident when the Genealogy is taken in connection with its larger context in the *Gospel*, and interpreted in the light of Luke's working aim and purpose when he wrote that *Gospel*. He spoke through the Lord's Mother in order that he might the more effectively link the Hope of Jesus the Savior with all the unsaved and all the saved in all the world.

III. The Divine-Human Savior and His Mission to Save as Introduced in the Four Gospel Records

The Lord Jesus Christ was both Divine and Human. His Pre-existence, as seen above, was twice surveyed, backward and forward, between eternity past and His Birth in Bethlehem. But how did the several Gospel Writers introduce the Lord Jesus? How did they approach this great subject? How exactly did each of them begin his account of this exalted Life-Story of the Son of God? In studying these questions, the first three Gospel Writers will be considered together, and John, who wrote later, will be studied separately.

I. *The Brief Introductions of the Three Synoptic Writers.* Matthew wrote in the year 58 A. D. Luke wrote in 60 or 62.

Mark wrote in 68; and John in 90. The first three of these writers considered the Life-Story of the Lord Jesus somewhat more closely from the same points of view. For this reason, Matthew, Mark and Luke are called the Synoptic Writers. Each of them gave a brief, but very important introductory statement to his account of the Gospel.

Matthew, as was previously suggested, wrote immediately for the Palestinian Jews. His purpose was to present to them the Lord Jesus Christ as their Messiah. Matthew presupposed, on the part of his Jewish readers, a working knowledge of the Old

"Eye-Witnesses,
and Ministers of the
Word"

Testament Scriptures. He therefore began his account of the Gospel at that point in history to which the momentum of truth in the Old Testament should have carried the Jews by the time of Christ's Birth. There is no break in thought between the closing chapter of *Malachi* and the opening chapter of *Matthew*. From the record of the last Promises the Jewish mind should have glided graciously into the record of their Fulfillment.

Matthew announced the central thought of his message in his first sentence: "The Book of the Generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham." Matthew first made good that statement, by tracing the human lineage of Jesus from Abraham down to Joseph and Mary. After this, as the next logical step, which will be explained more fully in the following chapter, Matthew stated the fact of Christ's Divine Fatherhood, treating it as a fact which the Jews should have known. And finally, he showed that the circumstances of Christ's Birth, and the Divinity in His Nature, were the direct fulfillment of ancient prophecies, with which the Jews were supposedly familiar. That was the method by which Matthew introduced Jesus Christ to the Jews. In so far as this method was ineffective, the fault was theirs, and not that of the Gospel Writer.

Luke wrote second, addressing his message of the Universal Savior to all the Greek-speaking world of his day. In Luke's thought, the Birth of Christ was a miraculous fact. His more-than-human Life and Works were a source of continuous wonder. Luke felt that the infinite volume of that Life needed a definite record. He therefore undertook to state the facts of Christ's Life correctly, as a basis for universal faith. His desire, as stated in the prefatory note to his Gospel, was to give such a record of the facts as would enable those who love God to know the certainty of those things wherein they had been instructed.

This *Preface* of Luke is full of interest. In it, he has passed in brief review the many imperfect attempts which had been made already to give an account of the Life-Work of the Lord Jesus. Luke further announced the Apostolical eye-witness as the source of his own information. He also avowed his own "perfect understanding of all things from the very first." This was his formula for a claim of *inspiration*. He declared, finally, his own purpose to tell the facts as they were, in regular order,

and thus to lay the foundation for the faith of all men in the Lord Jesus Christ. Working under these principles, Luke began at once to give, in great fullness of detail, the accepted facts about the mysterious Birth of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Mark wrote for the Romans, who exalted the ideals of power and achievement. Mark therefore approached the hearts of his

readers by way of these ideals, using them somewhat as Matthew had used the facts and prophecies of the Old Testament in his message to the Jews. Mark presented the Gospel of hurried action; the Gospel of Divine achievement; the Gospel of personal ministry; the Gospel, in a word, of the Son of God, with power complete and effective to save a lost world.

Mark began with a direct announcement of his message: "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." In the next two verses, Mark disposed of the prophetic connections of Christ with the ancient Jewish Scriptures. Within eight verses more, Mark stated the central facts in the mission of John the Baptist: his testimony to the approaching Savior, and his baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan. Then, disposing of the Temptations in two additional verses, Mark ushered the Lord Jesus out into His active Life-Work. Thus quickly did Mark set forth in action the Divine Power that was in the Son of God.

2. *The Fuller Outline of John's Introduction.* John wrote his Gospel a generation after the first three Synoptic Writers had given the world their respective accounts of the Gospel. There was still need, as John was made to feel, for a stronger emphasis upon the Divinity of Jesus Christ. None but the Son of God, the Divine Savior, could ever save a world, or a single individual,

"The Word Was
God . . . And the
Word Became
Flesh, and Dwelled
among Us."
John 1:1-18

from sin. Knowing that truth profoundly, John, guided by the Holy Spirit, set himself to the work of clarifying and exalting the thought and the faith of the Church, and of all the world, on the Nature of Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, Who also became the Son of Man, in order that He might reveal God and save the world.³⁸

John touched his central theme in the first verse of his Gospel, which peals forth from eternity like the sound of thunder: "In

³⁸Compare *John* 1:1, 14, 34, and 3:14-18, with *John* 20:31, and *1. John* 5:9-13; and remember that this *First Letter* was sent out to the Church by John along with his account of the Gospel.

the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." From that beginning, if all of his Writings

John's Comprehensive View of Jesus Christ

are considered, John has presented Christ, chronologically, under five periods of personal activity. (1) Christ, as the eternal Son of God, was with the Father from all eternity, enthroned in Heaven before the world was. (2) Christ, before His Incarnation, was over the world, and in it, with definite relations to the lives of men during the Old Testament Dispensation. (3) This eternal Son of God came to the world in Human Form, becoming also the Son of Man in and by His Birth, when "the Word became Flesh, and dwelled among us."

These three great facts John surveyed in the Introduction to his *Gospel*. But John's full view of Christ reached on into the eternity that is to come. The other two periods show this fact. (4) In his *Gospel*, John set forth the work of the Divine Christ here on earth. (5) Finally, John has set forth the two principal aspects of Christ's sovereign work since His exaltation. In *The First Epistle of John* especially, he has presented the spiritual work of grace that Christ is now doing in the hearts of men. In the *Revelation*, John has portrayed the ultimate triumph of Christ's Kingdom over the world of evil, and the culmination of that spiritual and eternal Kingdom in Heaven. The present study will now return to the first of these views of Christ, and make a brief analysis of the three important truths which John has written into the Introduction to his *Gospel* of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In his Introduction, John began his *Gospel* with Christ at the Throne of God in past eternity. John's first thought was to define the status of the Son of God at the Father's Throne before there was a world, or any other created thing. As John saw the truth, *The Eternal Word*, by which John means the Lord Jesus Christ, has sustained from all eternity three great defining relationships, which are stated in the following order.

1. Status of Christ in Eternity Past
John 1:1-5

First, John set forth the defining relation of Christ to God as God. The Son of God had an eternal pre-existence. He was "in the beginning." When the curtain of Time

(1) Relation of Christ to God as God
John 1:1

was raised to reveal the incipient stages of a new created world, the Son of God was there. He had been there from all eternity. Christ had a personal existence, being different from the Father. Yet Christ "was with God" in the most

intimate relations of the mysterious Trinity of Father, Son, and Spirit. Christ, in His nature and essence, from all eternity, was Divine. He "was God," as John has stated. These truths about the Son of God were the first things, according to John, that the world should know and believe.

Next, John defined the Christ as He was related to the work of creation, and to the world of created things. Before they were in existence, Christ "was in the beginning with God." Christ held counsel with the Father concerning the work of Creation, when that work was projected from the mind and heart of God. Christ was *Himself*

**(2) Relation of
Christ to the Work
of Creation**

John 1:2-3

the Creator of all things that exist. "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made."³⁹

Finally in these first thoughts, John defined the relation of Christ to life itself, and to the moral order of the world. "In Him was Life; and the Life was the Light of men." Christ was, and is, the source and summation of all spiritual life in the world. His Life Itself is the source and the standard of all moral truth. As in the first relationship defined above, Christ was the Word,

**(3) Relation of
Christ to Life and
to Moral Order
in the World**

John 1:4-5

revealing God to the world; so in this relationship, Christ was both the source of life and the light of life, revealing the possibilities and obligations of moral life in men who were to be created in the image and likeness of God.

Thus Christ, by virtue of His Divine Nature, His position, and His works, was supreme from all eternity. This was true of Christ apart from the thought of sin in the world. And thus also, the redeeming work of Christ is fully effective. He is the source, the standard, and the power of life. The Son of God Himself is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life." His work cannot fail, except in so far as men may fail to come unto God through Jesus Christ.

This is true also because of the truth in John's next statement. "And the Light shineth in darkness; and the darkness apprehended (or, *overcame*) it not." The potential conflict between Good and Evil was set up from all eternity. As physical light dispels darkness, is resisted by it, but is not overcome; so does the Life and Light of Christ shine victoriously in the moral world. This essential antagonism was inherent in the moral

³⁹This truth was restated many times in the Word of God. See *Genesis* 1:1, 26; *Hebrews* 1:2, 10; *Psalms* 102:25; *Ephesians* 3:9; *Colossians* 1:16; 3:10; *Revelation* 4:11; 10:6; and other like statements.

order of the world from the first; but the darkness cannot overcome. In the larger sense, Truth is almighty, because it is of Christ. This potential conflict became active in Man's first deception and sin; and its victorious issue was formally announced in God's first judgment upon Satan and his works.⁴⁰

In his Introduction, John has assembled his next group of thoughts around this truth: That Christ, the Son of God, was

**2. Revelation of
Christ to the World
before His
Incarnation
John 1:6-13**

over the ancient world as the appointed Savior, in Whom men should believe; and that He was progressively revealed to the ancient world before His own Incarnation. He was thus revealed to the world in general, and to the chosen Nation of the Jews in a special manner. No student of history can doubt that God's Son of Promise was set before the ancient world with all the clearness that the interests of men in those days would allow.

John, in presenting this phase of his subject, spoke of Christ, first, as the concern of ancient Prophecy. John the Apostle has

**(1) Christ the Con-
cern of Prophecy
John 1:6-8**

here spoken of Prophecy in terms of John the Baptist and his testimony to Christ as the Light of the world. But the Apostle here thought of John the Baptist as typifying all Prophecy. This might well be true: for John the Baptist represented the Elijah of the Old Testament, and so summarized in himself the mission of all the prophets.⁴¹

John "was a man sent from God . . . to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe." That mission was the culmination of all Prophecy. There was a logical presumption that God would thus reveal His Son to the world; and the larger purpose of Prophecy has always been to make known that revelation. Prophecy as an institution, in its true sense, has always been related to the Son of God. It is a witness-bearing agency, ordained of God, for revealing to the world the truth of Jesus Christ. So has John, in the verses cited above, related Prophecy to the Son of God before His Incarnation.

John's next thought is that Christ was presented to the ancient world through the channels of natural religion. The Light of

⁴⁰On Christ as the Light of the world, see *John* 1:6-8; 3:19; 8:12; 9:5; 12:35, 36, 46; *Luke* 16:8; *2. Corinthians* 6:14; *Ephesians* 5:8; *1. Thessalonians* 5:5; *John* 1:5-7; 2:9-11. On Christ's victory over evil, see *Genesis* 3:15; *Matthew* 1:21; *John* 3:16-18; 10:28-30; 12:31; 16:33; *1. John* 3:13; 4:4; *Matthew* 28:18-20.

⁴¹On Elijah, compare the following: *1. Kings* 17:1-21:29; *2. Kings* 1:3-2:11; *2. Chronicles* 21:12-15; *Malachi* 4:5-6; *John* 1:21; *Matthew* 11:13-14; and *Luke* 1:15-17. See also *Matthew* 17:3-4; 10:13; *Mark* 9:1-13; *Luke* 9:30; *Matthew* 16:14; *Mark* 6:15; *Luke* 9:8; *Matthew* 27:47-49; and *Mark* 15:36.

Christ "lighteth every man that (or, *as he*) cometh into the world." This seems clearly to refer to conscience as a natural guide, which has never been fully tested in its

(2) Christ Revealed through the Channels of Natural Religion John 1:9-10 power to lead men to Christ. The Lord has planted in every person the moral voice of conscience, and the light of a conscious immortality. If these powers were always

heeded at their best, there is no knowing, except by such actual experience, what floods of divine truth might thus come into the soul. God has many ways of revealing Himself. Christ said, "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine." That was given as a test of the truth. But Christ said again, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."⁴²

Thus God has spoken through the Moral and Spiritual Voice within Man. But the Son of God, even before the Incarnation, was immanent in the external world, and spoke to the world through the voice that speaks in external things. "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not." The creative and administrative wisdom, power, glory, and benevolence of Christ, were written, then as now, upon every page of Nature's Infinite Book of beauty, and law, and power, and goodness to men. But the greedy world has too often been ready to receive, and too rarely ready to recognize with gratitude, and love, and devotion. In the midst of His goodness, men forgot the Lord. The calamity of the ancient Flood was *one* result. The sin and misery of modern heathen lands and pagan lives is *another*.⁴³ He was in the world, and the world knew Him not.

To save the world from complete apostasy, God chose a special people Israel, and set them apart to know His truth, and to do His service. To the Jews were committed, in a very special way,

⁴²John 7:17, and Matthew 5:8. On conscience, see the following: its power to condemn (John 8:7-9); its sacredness as a social obligation (1. Cor. 8:6-13; 10:24-33); its power when it approves (1. Peter 2:19; 3:15-17; 2. Timothy 1:3); its contributions to harmony and joy in Christ (Romans 9:1; 2. Cor. 1:12; 2. Timothy 1:3); its power to obscure the truth (2. Cor. 4:2-4; 1. Timothy 1:19; 4:1-2; Titus 1:15-16; Jude 3-16); and its power to guide to Christ and His truth (Romans 2:14-15; 1. Timothy 1:5; 3:9; 2. Timothy 1:3; Hebrews 9:8-15; 10:1-10, and 22).

⁴³Genesis 6:1-7. God's attributes of wisdom, and power, and majesty, and goodness (in part), are revealed in His works and laws of nature. His moral attributes, such as love, holiness, justice, and mercy, require a special written revelation to make them clear. (See Psalm 19, whose first part (1-6) exalts God as revealed in Nature; and whose last part (7-14) extols the moral character of God as reflected in His Word.) The world needs to know God as He is revealed both in Nature and in His Word. *Deism* depends only upon the former for a knowledge of God. But *Deism* has always failed as an effective control of moral life. Yet Nature does speak volumes of truth concerning the Lord, Who created the world, and Who is in it now. (Compare the statement of Paul, in Acts 17:22-31; and of Virgil, in his *Fourth Eclogue*, where he seems to speak of the coming Christ, within the last half-century before the Lord's Birth.)

the Oracles of Salvation. The Jews were taught the truth of God by special Revelation, which was given progressively through long centuries of their national life.

(3) Christ Presented in Special Revelation to Israel
John 1:11-13

To the Jews, as to no other people in ancient times, God revealed His Son, as Jehovah-God and as the Messiah of Promise. From this special favor of God to Israel, two results followed.

The first was moral guilt. The world at large, by its own weight of evil, potential and accumulated, fell away from God.

a. Moral Guilt Added in Israel because of Added Truth
John 1:11

But in the case of Israel, when there was apostasy, there was an added element of sin: because Israel had a special Revelation of Divine Truth. Nevertheless Israel sinned. Unfortunately, as Paul later lamented, "they were not all Israel, who were of Israel."

Many Jews in every generation seem not to have heard the truth of God as given in the Law and the Prophets. They saw not His glory in the sacrifices and ceremonies. They raised not their voices to praise Him in the Psalms. First, they wilfully neglected God's truth; and thus, inevitably and with added guilt, they effectively rejected Jehovah as their Lord, and King, and Savior. In every generation before His Birth into the world, the Son of God "came unto His own, and His own received Him not." Their added guilt for this rejection was the first result of God's special favor to the Jews.⁴⁴

The second result was that of an effective spiritual response. "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on

b. Faith and Eternal Life to the Jews Who Believed on the Promised Savior
John 1:12-13

His Name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Spiritual understanding of the truth, and individual faith have ever led to eternal life. There were always those

in Israel, as Simeon and Anna, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, who accepted Christ, and honored Him as the eternal Son of God. This was true before His Birth, when men could only look forward, through the promises, to His Coming into the world. Always such faith was the result of a sympathetic spiritual perception of the truth, and a personal response to the

⁴⁴See *Matthew* 3:9; *John* 8:33-44; *Romans* 9:6-8; *Galatians* 3:6-9, and 29; and also Chapter XI, Note 2, on Spiritual Apperception. This spirit of rejection among the Jews reached its national culmination in their attitude toward Jesus Christ, Whom they rejected, opposed, persecuted, and crucified.

Spirit of God. Always, too, such faith, in its turn, resulted in salvation: for it constituted the believer a redeemed child of God.

Finally, in this exalted Introduction, John declared that God's eternal Son was *born into the world*. "The Word became Flesh,

**3. Birth of Christ
into the World:
His Incarnation
John 1:14-18**

and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; and we beheld His glory, glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father." The Son of God came down from Heaven, and tabernacled among men. The Promised Messiah

had, in a new and more definite sense, "come unto His own."

The first fact here is the Birth of Christ,—His Incarnation. God *sent His Son into the world*. Christ *came (descended)* from

**(1) Character of the
Incarnated Christ
John 1:14**

Heaven. The eternal, pre-existent "Word" was made Flesh, and tabernacled among us." Christ was God "manifested in the flesh." To Him belonged all the Shekinah

Glory that was symbolized in ancient Israel. Jesus Christ was the express image of His Heavenly Father. In Jesus of Nazareth dwelled all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. He was "full of grace and truth." He was salvation and guidance. He was the Divine Savior, the Only Begotten of His Father, the one eternal Son of God, Who had, in His Birth, become also the Son of Man, that He might provide eternal life for those who put their trust in Him.⁴⁵

John has supported his introductory survey of the Divine Character of Jesus Christ by personal testimony of two kinds.

**(2) Personal Testimony to the Son
of God
John 1:14b-15**

The first was that of the Apostles, who were able to speak from long, intimate, and authoritative association with the Lord Jesus. John, speaking as one of them, declared that the Apostles "beheld His glory, the glory as

of the Only Begotten of the Father." This general testimony is greatly elaborated in the details of John's *Gospel*.

The other personal testimony cited by John was that of John the Baptist, who was the appointed Forerunner of the Christ. In this testimony, John the Baptist identified Jesus of Nazareth with the Messiah, therein also declaring the pre-existence of the Christ. "This is He," said John, "of Whom I said, 'He That cometh after me is preferred before me: for He was before Me.' And of His fulness have we all received, and grace for grace."

⁴⁵See *Exodus* 40:34-38; *1. Kings* 8:10-11; *2. Chronicles* ESVC-VD; *7:1-2*; *Ezekiel* 10:4; *2. Corinthians* 4:4; *Colossians* 1:15-17; *2:9*; *Hebrews* 1:3; *1. Corinthians* 1:24-31; *John* 14:6; *Luke* 1:35; *2:11*.

There was great force in this testimony of John the Baptist as it was here cited by John the Apostle. Only a few verses (6-8) above, the Apostle had used John the Baptist as the summation of all Prophecy. At this time the Apostle cited the Baptist only as an individual witness, who had been in close personal touch with Christ. The Apostle has thus called upon John the Baptist to act the parts both of an authoritative personal witness and of *the Representative Prophet*. Therefore, when John the Baptist testified in this double capacity, he affirmed with final authority that the Incarnated Word was the fulfillment of all that God had promised through the ancient prophets concerning His Son's being born into the world as a Divine-Human Savior.

The results of the Incarnation of the Son of God, according to John's Introduction, are of three kinds. First, there is for the believer a growing participation in the divine fullness of the Son of God: for "of His fullness have all we received, and grace for grace." Further, through this event, there has been a transfer of conscious authority for moral righteousness from the Law, which was imposed from without, to the sanctifying Spirit and the compelling love of truth and right now enthroned in Christian hearts. Under the old order of Moses, men moved at the command of the Law. But under Christ, men are elevated to the plane of truth and grace, and are moved by the power of a consecrated and consecrating love for Christ and righteousness. Finally, Christians, who are thus elevated and ennobled, are enabled more and more to perceive the revelation of God which the Son of God, Who is in the bosom of the Father, has so faithfully declared to all the world.

**(3) Results to Men
from the Incarna-
tion of Christ
John 1:16-18**

This entire chapter has been an introductory survey of the Divinity of Jesus Christ. No other truth is more important. The whole *Gospel of John* stands, in a special way, for an emphasis upon the importance of knowing the truth, and especially the truth concerning the Nature of Jesus Christ, Who was the Son of God, and Who became also the Son of Man. Good impulses, and good intentions, do not at all compensate for ignorance and untruth. Eternal life consists in *knowing the true God, and His Son Jesus Christ*.

Saving faith, as John defined it, begins with confidence in the Divinity of Christ. Faith first exalts Christ, and then holds on to Him, Who is Divine, and because He is Divine. Reason affirms that only a Divine Savior can save those lost in sin. The facts prove that Christ was Divine, and the divinely appointed

Savior of the world. Every reasonable man (because he must, if he is reasonable) will accept Jesus Christ as a personal Savior. Therefore faith, which properly begins with the honoring of Christ, results in bringing and revealing the greatest honor of Man. God has ordained that it should be even so.

Here then is the secret of final security. No sane man would dare to trust any other mere man as a savior. But God, through the Gospel Writers, has invited all the world to do three things: first, to *believe* that Jesus Christ is the Son of God from all eternity; second, to *trust* Him absolutely as a Divine and personal Savior; and third, to *know* that none can pluck them out of His hands. That is the Divine and effective Savior Who will be commended to the reader in the following chapters on the Life-Work of Jesus Christ the Son of God.

CHAPTER II

THE MIRACULOUS BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST

"Behold, a Virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel." *Isaiah 7:14.* (735 B. C.).

"But unto you that fear My Name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings." *Malachi 4:2.*

"Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; . . . believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." *1. Peter 1:7-9.*

The Birth of God's eternal Son into the world was a miracle. Like the ancient birth of Isaac, and the contemporary birth of John the Baptist, the Birth of Christ was effected directly by the power of God.

This truth must be accepted. The Divine Fatherhood of Jesus Christ is the mightiest truth of all history. The witnesses thereto were competent witnesses. Their testimony, both in kind and in value, is not unlike that which comes from the modern scientific laboratory. To doubt this truth is to contradict the Word of God. To say that Christ's Birth could not have happened by miraculous power is both unscientific, and degrading both to God and Man. Such a conclusion is an egregious begging of the question. It is an arrogant assumption, supported always by a superficial and erroneous type of argument which has one fixed formula. First, men make their god, with all necessary limitations; and then they declare what he can, or cannot do. Such so-called reasoning, on two valid biblical counts, can lead only to a just condemnation.

But God has invited men to look at a Fact, itself supported by a combination of facts, all of which were brought about by the true God of Heaven, "the Almighty God," for Whom nothing is too hard, but with Whom all things are possible. The miracle of Christ's Birth was wrought by no fiction of the mind of man, but by "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."¹

I. The Secret Mystery of Christ's Birth

The Birth of Jesus Christ involved a great secret mystery. He did not begin to be when He was born in Bethlehem: for He was from all eternity. But He was there born into the world. Naturally, the secret mystery of the Lord's Birth was best known to Mary, His Virgin Mother. Soon, however, this secret was made known to Joseph, to whom Mary was about

"Jesus Is the Son of God"

1. John 5:5

¹*Genesis 17:1; 18:14; Hebrews 11:11-12, 17-19; Luke 1:18-19, 34-37; Numbers 11:*

to be married. About the same time, perhaps even earlier, the secret was told, but not by Mary and Joseph, to a few of their own intimate friends. For this limited group of friends alone, for a while at least, this great secret was intended; and by them it was kept, sacredly and with great amazement.

1. The Great Secret Defined. This secret was concerned with the manner in which the Child Jesus should be born. The facts had been foretold; and the group of interested friends looked forward to the event of this Birth, with subdued curiosity, keen expectation, and great wonder. The Mother of the Child, as the facts were foretold, was to be the Virgin Mary. She therefore be-

**"Mary . . . Was
Found with Child
of the Holy Ghost"
Matthew 1:18
Luke 1:35**

came at once the person of central interest in the group. The fact that this Virgin had been promised a Son aroused in her friends an intimate curiosity. But the explanation which accompanied that promise filled them all with a feeling of awe, and reverence, and mystery. The Child thus promised was to have no human father. The Virgin Mother should bear a Son; and the Father of that Son was to be the Spirit of God. The conception and birth of the Child was to be a miracle. The fore-knowledge of that mysterious event was the secret which lay deep in the hearts of those to whom the facts had been revealed,—the Virgin Mother, her future husband, and the few intimate friends.

2. The Great Secret Explained. The facts thus foretold were full of absorbing interest and increasing wonder. This secret mystery of Christ's Birth carried with it the understanding of the deeper truth concerning His true Nature. This Child was appointed to be far more than an ordinary child. By birth, He had His Mother's nature, and therefore was Human. Rightly did He, in His later work, regard Himself as *the Son of Man*. But on the Father's side, this Child was literally *the Son of God*. The

**"A Child Is Born,
. . . (Whose)
Name Shall Be
Called WONDER-
FUL . . . THE
MIGHTY GOD"
Isaiah 9:6
(738 B. C.)**

Lord Jesus Christ had a Divine Nature as well as a Human Nature. That is what the secret fact of His Birth meant.

That meaning, without doubt, was well recognized by those who then knew the secret. They never regarded Jesus as an ordinary Child. Just the opposite was true. With wondering

23; Job 42:2; Jeremiah 32:17; Zechariah 8:6; Matthew 3:9; 19:26; Mark 10:27; Luke 18:27; Isaiah 55:8-9; Ephesians 1:3. There are many evidences that God had given the world special lessons respecting His power, possibly in direct preparation for ready confidence in the miraculous Birth of His Son.

interest, they considered the mystery of His parentage, and the consequent dual nature of the Child. With great amazement, they followed the unfolding of this Divine-Human Child into the maturity of manhood. Never did they lose sight of His Human Nature. He was always Mary's Son. But many a time did they marvel at the unfolding evidences of His Divine Nature, Especially did His Mother ponder these things in her heart.

3. *The Central Position of This Secret in the Early Life-Story of Jesus Christ.* For thirty years the Lord's Mother and

**"For He Shall
Grow Up As a
Tender Plant, and
As a Root Out of a
Dry Ground"**
Isaiah 53:2

her interested friends watched Him grow, until the time when He began His public ministry. During those thirty years of His early Life-Story, the recorded facts have to do primarily with one central fact. That central fact was the mystery of Christ's Birth, and the Divine Nature in Him that

followed from His Being the Son of God. That secret mystery, with its meaning of Divinity, was the central fact in His early life. The Gospels have told the simple story of the birth of a God among men, and of the wonders that would inevitably attach to the life of a Divine Child Who grew up among men as did Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God.

Jesus Christ was a Divine Child. This one fact is the focus of all the particular facts of His early life-story. Out of this central fact all of the wonder and amazement arose. Around this central fact all the records of His first thirty years may best be analyzed, and organized, and unified. This central prominence of the secret mystery of Christ's Birth, and of His Divine Nature that followed from that Birth, will appear, with increasing emphasis, in the following analysis and study of His Life-Story up until He was thirty years of age, and ready to begin His public ministry.

II. The Preparation of the Witnesses to the Birth of Christ

This group of divinely chosen friends were the first witnesses to the Birth of Christ. They were especially well qualified for the testimony which they were to give concerning that miraculous event. The Birth of Christ, even as a miraculous event, had been heralded in ancient Prophecy. Definite details of His Birth, a short time before it happened, were described to that small group of friends who were immediately concerned. Most of the facts were foretold, in a definite way, to Mary, the

**"God Also Bearing
Them Witness"**
Hebrews 2:4

Lord's Mother, and to those associated closely with her. The purpose of these special revelations was to prepare adequately, by giving them advanced knowledge, a number of strong witnesses who might fully attest the secret mystery and the miraculous fact of Christ's Birth into the world.

In order that such witnesses may be competent, they must be thoroughly convinced in their own minds. This assurance came to them on this occasion from the fact that they had fully known the facts before they had actually occurred. Any explanation of the mystery *after* its occurrence would have left the witnesses with some uncertainty, and the world at large with a lack of satisfaction. But the case at this time was different. Full explanations of coming events were given in advance. The immediate fulfillment of certain foretold events at once filled the minds of all the witnesses with perfect confidence.

Assurance was here rendered doubly sure. Forecasts, in full detail, were multiplied. Concrete and tangible circumstances were interlocked. Foretold events that were immediately realized led directly on to other events that were promised; and all pointed, with unquestioned certainty, to the literal certainty of Christ's Divine-Human parentage. Those future witnesses of Christ's strange Birth had more than *individual* fore-knowledge of the things that were happening, and about to happen. They had *common* knowledge, resulting from counsel held among themselves as to the revelations which they had individually received. They knew, from definite common understanding, the interwoven facts, as set forth in the following outlines. They were therefore eminently qualified to testify as to the nature and the facts of the miraculous Birth of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I. *The Preliminary Revelations Concerning the Miraculous Birth of Christ.* God first revealed the approaching Birth of His Son to certain individuals individually. This was the first step in the preparation of those witnesses who should support this mysterious Event of the Lord's Birth. There were three of these preliminary announcements of the approaching Birth of Jesus.

The first announcement of the mysterious conception and Birth of Christ seems to have been made to Zacharias. He was a faithful priest of the Lord, and was well grown in years. The message came to him at the altar, and was made in connection with the promise to himself of a son, who should be called John. For such a blessing Zacharias had devoutly prayed, The answer, which had now come, did two

1. Announcement to
Zacharias (and
Elizabeth)
Luke 1:5-25

things. It promised a son to Zacharias, and it set that son in a definite relation with the soon-to-be-born Savior of the world.

Just how much was revealed to Zacharias about the Birth of Christ, the records do not expressly state. However, much must have been revealed that has not been recorded. Zacharias certainly learned the main facts, and as certainly told (or wrote) them circumstantially to his wife Elizabeth. They next appear separately in the story; and they were then both fully aware of the secret mystery in the approaching Birth of Jesus.

Moreover, there was an immediate support to their own faith in these matters. The promised Birth of John, their own son, was closely related to the approaching Birth of Christ. But this birth of John was then, at the advanced age of Elizabeth, an unnatural hope. The promise required a miracle from God. For questioning the power of God to bring such an unnatural thing to pass, Zacharias was smitten with dumbness. Thus informed, and thus assured by very tangible proofs, the faithful priest and his aged wife were fully prepared to await the Savior's miraculous Birth, and to witness the integrity of that event before all the world.

The next revelation of the secret mystery in the approaching Birth of the Son of God was made to the Virgin Mary, who had been chosen to be the Mother of the Lord Jesus Christ. To her, more fully than to any other person, there was given a full circumstantial account of the approaching Birth of the Lord, of the secret mystery involved in that Birth, and of the manner in which that miraculous Birth should be brought about.

**2. Announcement to
the Virgin Mary
Luke 1:26-38**

Mary was a young woman of Nazareth, a town of Galilee, which had a prophetic connection with the promised Messiah of her people. She was betrothed in marriage to Joseph, a young man of the same town. They expected soon to be married; but as yet Mary lived the life of virgin purity. She was also descended from the House of David. These circumstances may have augmented in Mary's heart the hope which tradition has lodged in the bosom of every pious Jewish maiden of those ancient days. That was the hope of being the mother of the promised Messiah of Israel.²

Such a hope, even if faintly conceived, would have helped to account for the great excitement with which Mary received the

²For other facts about Mary, see the Index, under "Mary, the Mother of Jesus."

first words of the salutation from the Angel touching the great secret of her own life. But the Angel Messenger, seeing her

(2) **God's Promise to Mary: "Ave Maria"**

anxiety, spoke with re-assuring words, and gave her his announcement and the necessary explanations. He declared her to be especially favoured of God, above all other women. He promised her a Son, Who should be called JESUS, which means *God with Us*. The Angel declared the glorious character, and mission, and destiny of the Son thus promised. "He shall be great," said the Angel; "and He shall be called the Son of the Most High: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the Throne of His father David: and He shall reign over the House of Jacob forever; and of His Kingdom there shall be no end."

That was a strange promise. One question on the part of Mary was, at this point, inevitable. How could she be blessed with a child, if that child was to have no

(3) **Full Explanation of the Miraculous Birth of Jesus**

human father? With amazement, she asked, "How shall this thing be?" In response, the Angel Messenger explained in full how such an unnatural birth might still be possible.

He stated that the Child thus promised was to be literally *the Son of God*. "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee," he said to Mary; "and the Power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: wherefore also that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called *the Son of God*." That was God's explanation of the miraculous Birth of Jesus Christ, Who thus became both God and Man.

Was such a thing possible? Yes; it was quite possible under the power of God. As an immediate proof of this truth, the Messenger pointed out to Mary the case of her kinswoman Elizabeth, who had "conceived a son in her old age," Yes; it was possible. Long before this revelation to Mary, in two experiences most precious to Israel's memory, God had declared Himself to be *The Almighty God*, and had challenged the faith of Abraham with this rebuking question, *Is any thing too hard for the Lord?* "This was the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes."³ But with the re-assuring words of the Angel Mary was satisfied. She accepted the situation, and faced the future, with the deepest secret of all history in her heart. The significance of that secret was never absent from her mind, except for one brief moment of great anxiety, in all of her thought, from that day forward, about her more-than-human Son.

Finally, this secret was fully revealed to Joseph, the future husband of Mary. The partial fulfillment of the promise already made to Mary presented to Joseph a delicate situation. His ignorance of the secret facts, plus his naturally kind heart, and his love for Mary, greatly increased his perplexity.

But an informing message solved his difficulties.

While Joseph was thinking on these things, "behold, an Angel of the Lord appeared unto him." This Messenger appealed to Joseph as being in line with the Promise to the House of David, and urged upon him three strong points. First, Joseph was instructed to fulfill his marriage obligations to Mary. Second, he was advised to accept in full the explanation then given of Mary's prospective motherhood. And third, he was informed that this entire mysterious situation was according to the plan and purpose of God, as was set forth in an ancient prophecy, which the Angel quoted at length, and no doubt with many explanations. Satisfied with the matter as thus presented, and filled with wonder at the expansive vision suggested by this great message, Joseph accepted his responsibilities in connection with the greatest event of all history, the miraculous Birth of the Son of God into the world.

2. *The Mutual Understandings among the Several Witnesses to the Approaching Birth of Christ.* God gave separate revelations to the several witnesses. But God did far more than that. He brought about a strong support of common knowledge among the chosen witnesses. This was accomplished by a series of personal conferences, and mutual understandings, which those concerned had one with another about those strange things which God had revealed to them individually.

Those perfect understandings among the witnesses were in an order which was exactly the reverse of that in which the revelations had previously been made. Naturally, the first of these conferences was that between Joseph and Mary. This resulted in a sacred agreement between them. Each of them knew the great secret. Each knew that the other knew and accepted the secret. Thus was the delicacy of the situation removed. It was dissolved, rather, in the momentous common confidence entrusted to and accepted by them. They went on with their marriage plans; but they accepted the

3. **Announcement to Joseph**
Matthew 1:18-25

1. **Sacred Agreement between Joseph and Mary**
Matthew 1:24-25

³See *Genesis* 17:1; 18:14; and *Psalms* 118:23.

responsibility of defending absolutely the integrity of the great secret committed to their keeping.

While events, circumstantially interlocked in the promises of God, were moving on toward their definite fulfillment, there occurred a scene of mutual confidence and ex-

2. Lyrical Conference between Mary and Elizabeth
Luke 1:39-56

alted lyrical expression, between the two prospective mothers, Mary and Elizabeth. The occasion was that of a visit by Mary to her cousin Elizabeth, who lived in the hill country of Judea. The central interest of both mothers was in the prospective Birth of Jesus: for of that event they had common knowledge and a mutual confidence.

The soul of each was full of song. "Blessed art thou among women!" So began the lyrical salutation of Elizabeth, which showed how thoroughly she had already

(1) Lyrical Salutation of Elizabeth
Luke 1:42-45

understood the secret delivered to Mary. "And whence is this to me," Elizabeth continued, in strains of ecstasy, "that the Mother of my Lord should come unto me?" "And blessed," exclaimed Elizabeth, with still greater elation of soul, "is she that believed; for there shall be a fulfillment of these things which have been spoken to her from the Lord!"

The soul of Mary was exalted even more than that of Elizabeth by the thoughts of this occasion. The lyrical response of

(2) "Magnificat" Sung by Mary
Luke 1:46-55

Mary was given in the *Magnificat*, which is one of the greatest songs of all time. Doubtless it was sung then with a sweetness and significance which could never be given by any other person.

*"My soul doth magnify the Lord,
And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior."*

So sang the Lord's Mother, breathing the natural joy of anticipated motherhood, and touching exactly the central secret of her own life.

The *Magnificat* showed how fully Mary had come to comprehend the deepest significance of the secret committed to her. She had pondered those strange things in her heart. But she had done more than that. Her song showed very clearly that she had pondered those things also in connection with the precious promises which God had made concerning the Birth of His Son into the world. Thus the two blessed women rejoiced together. They considered the revelations and promises which had been made

about the strange things that were soon to happen. They looked even then upon those strange things partially fulfilled. They parted, at the close of their prolonged conference, with a definite understanding, and with a confidence that was as strong as iron.

At length, the cycle of confident understanding was completed in Zacharias. To him first the revelation of the mysterious Birth

**3. Phophetic Ec-
stasy of Zacharias
Luke 1:57-80**

of Christ was made. At that time a son was promised to Zacharias, who was instructed to call that son John. Since the day of that promise, the things that had transpired had filled the soul of Zacharias with wonder, and confidence, and song. Therefore, when his tongue was finally loosed, at the birth of his son, the song of Zacharias had but one exalted burden. The *Benedictus* which he sang resounds with many notes of joy; but there is in it only one central theme of praise.

*"Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel;
For He hath visited and wrought redemption for His people,
And hath raised up a Horn of Salvation for us
In the House of His Servant David! . . .*

* * *

*To shew mercy towards our fathers,
And to remember His Holy Covenant;
The oath which He sware unto Abraham our father,*

* * *

*Yea and thou, Child, shalt be called
The Prophet of the Most High:
For thou shalt go before the face of the Lord
To make ready His ways;
To give knowledge of Salvation unto His people!*

The song continued. The meaning was clear, and clearly stated. There was in the *Benedictus*, beautifully expressed, the natural joy of fatherhood. There was also a personal glorifying of the Child John that was born. But deeper than both of these joys, was the joy which Zacharias here felt in another Child Who should soon be born, and in the relation of his own son to that other Person greater than himself. Inspired by definite knowledge of the approaching Birth of Christ, this devout priest had his eyes fixed here upon "the Horn of Salvation . . . in the House of David." The exultant father's heart was filled with joy at the thought of his son's going "before the face of the Lord, to make ready His ways." The *Benedictus*

**Meaning of the
"Benedictus"**

was a definite exaltation of Christ, Whose approaching Birth was foreseen by the father of John the Baptist.

The Gospel Records, as analyzed, have thus far emphasized three things. The Son of God pre-existed from all eternity at the Throne of God in Heaven. That eternal Son of God was born into the world, as the Son of Man, through the miraculous motherhood of the Virgin Mary. The secret mystery of Christ's Birth was known and understood in advance of the event.

The Virgin Mother knew the secret well. So did the friends closely associated with her. They regarded that secret as a matter of sacred confidence from God. They understood what it meant. Around it gathered their mutual confidence, and amazement, and joy. They understood that the Divine Son of God was being born into the world. Around this central Fact, gathered all of their subsequent interest in the Child Jesus: for the mystery of His Birth continued to be the organizing center of all that was said of Him up to the beginning of His public ministry.

III. The Public Manifestations of the Secret Mystery of Christ's Birth

The matters discussed up to this point have belonged to the period before the Birth of Christ. The facts and events considered thus far were in preparation for, and led up to, that miraculous event. Before Christ's Birth, the approaching Fact and its secret mystery were known only to the chosen few who were immediately concerned. But the time soon came, when the Birth itself became a fact, openly known; and when the Nature of the Child Jesus, resulting from the secret of His being the Son of God, was to be openly manifested to all the world.

The first full manifestation of this cherished secret, now open to the world, was that realized by Mary, and her faithful husband Joseph. To them the actuality of the secret came in the form of *facts*, facts of personal and intimate experience. Separately, they had heard the promises. Together, they had pondered the secret mystery. With perfect confidence, they had watched

the outworking of other events which were related, in the several promises, to the Birth for which they had looked with central interest. Meantime, they had probably read together many Scriptural Promises concerning their own prospective Child Jesus.

"God Was Manifested in the Flesh"

1. Timothy 3:16

1. Realization of the Fact by Mary and Joseph
Matthew 1:18-25
Luke 2:1-7

Naturally, they found many of those Promises very precious, and others curious, and some even very perplexing.

But the mysterious Birth had at last become a *fact*, a thing actually realized in their own experience. The Virgin was a mother: not in her native town of Nazareth, but far away in Bethlehem of Judea, even as it was written! To Mary and Joseph it was all strange, wondrous strange! But it was all true! Before them, in His lowly manger-cradle, lay the Child Jesus, the Infant Savior! *And they knew that He was the Son of God.*⁴

But other wonders were soon to come upon that little group in the Stable in Bethlehem. Strange events from without, yet unknown to this happy circle, were about to

**2. Divine Message
about Jesus to the
Shepherds of
Bethlehem
Luke 2:8-20**

add a new mystery and honor to the Divine Person Who had come into their midst. Out on the quiet hills of Judea were Shepherds, keeping watch by night. To them, next, the Child of Mystery was manifested. They knew nothing of the secret of His Birth, and nothing of His Divine Presence so near to them. Therefore these necessary facts were communicated to the Shepherds by a direct message from Heaven, which was sent through the Angel Messengers

⁴On this incident of Joseph and Mary's being in Bethlehem at this time, and on the general credibility of Luke's narrative as a whole, see Sir William M. Ramsay's *Luke the Physician and Other Studies in the History of Religion*, The Doran Co., N. Y., 1908, Studies I, II, and VII; and the same author's *Was Christ Born at Bethlehem?* *A study in the Credibility of St. Luke*. G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1898.

In the second of the above books, the author has made a strong argument for full confidence in the authority of Luke as a careful historian, and even as one of the greatest historians. Luke had a superior opportunity to know the facts. His purpose was to supplement, with greater authoritative detail, the general Gospel record, and especially the account of the Birth of Jesus, concerning which, in Chapters I and II, Luke has given an extended circumstantial narrative. Professor Ramsay has argued with force that Luke must have gotten these intimate facts largely, and perhaps directly, from Mary, the Lord's Mother.

But the main purpose of this book was to show that Christ was probably born in Bethlehem, as stated in the Scriptures. In order to support this thesis, it was necessary to show (1) that there was a *first* Enrolment of the Jews in Palestine "made when Cyrenius (Quirinius) was governor of Syria," as stated in *Luke 2:1-2*; (2) that this *first* Enrolment was at an earlier date, such as would correspond with the date of Christ's Birth, and was not a confusion on the part of Luke with the great Census, A.D. 7, taken by Quirinius during his later governorship of Syria; and (3) that this *first* Enrolment, as stated by Luke, was taken according to the Jewish tribal plan, and not the Roman residential plan, as was the great Census in A.D. 7, which, being Roman, caused rebellion among the Jews (*Acts 5:37*). Some critics have doubted an earlier administration of Quirinius in Syria, and the making by him of a *first* Enrolment, and have supposed that Luke has so confused this matter with the great Census of A.D. 7 as to discredit him as a reliable historian. But the author of this book feels that there is no need for alarm at this type of criticism, since Luke has probably stated the facts as they really were.

Professor Ramsay has shown, from recent discoveries, that there was a system of Enrolments in Egypt, made in a 14-year cycle, under Roman rule, and probably inaugurated by Augustus, who modeled it on an older Egyptian custom. This plan, or one similar, was inaugurated by Augustus in Syria, probably about the periodic year 9 B.C. This would have required, according to custom, the actual making of the Enrolment in the year 8-7 B.C. for the first time (*Luke 2:1-2*). However, owing to the delicate and difficult situation of Herod in Palestine, then held under Syria, this first Enrolment was probably delayed for some time among the Jews. But in the year 8-7 B.C. Herod lost favor with Augustus; and, as a result of the new

who appeared on this occasion for that purpose.

The Angel of the Lord first appeared before the Shepherds and caused great excitement and fear among them. But with re-assuring words the Angel calmed their fears; and then he gave them two important points of information concerning the Child Jesus. First, the Angel told of the Birth, and of the Divine Nature, of the new-born Savior. "Unto you is born this day . . . a Savior, Which is Christ the Lord." So the Fact was announced by this Heavenly Herald. Then he told the Shepherds where and how they might find this Infant Savior. Having already said that Christ was born "in the City of David," the Angel explained further that the Shepherds should "find the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger." After these instructions, the Chorus of Angels appeared from Heaven, and exalted the Infant Savior in their song:

*Glory to God in the highest!
And on earth
Peace, Good Will toward Men!*

The Shepherds were profoundly interested, and hastened into Bethlehem. There they found the facts to be even as they had been announced concerning the Child Jesus. Then the Shepherds told there the remarkable things that had been spoken by the Angels. Wonder was thus piled upon wonder concerning the Child. The immediate results were of three kinds. The minds of all present were filled with amazement. Mary, who added these new wonders to all that she knew

Imperial policy in Palestine, the Enrolment was ordered to be taken. Herod sent an embassy to Rome to beg for exemption from the Enrolment; but Augustus was firm, allowing, even after a second embassy from Herod, only a postponement and not an exemption.

Accordingly, the first Jewish Enrolment was probably made about the year B.C. 6, as we would count the time. However, Herod conciliated the Jews by numbering the people according to the old Jewish custom of a tribal enrolment. This accommodation to provincial prejudices was in accord with Roman policy in general, and may have been by direct instruction in this instance; since such a plan would distinguish between the rebellious Jews and the other inhabitants of Palestine who were loyal to Rome, and so give data that would be valuable in a military way in case of national rebellion on the part of the Jews.

Furthermore, as Professor Ramsay has shown, this date 6 B.C. fits into the Syrian situation in a way that harmonizes with the suggestions of Luke. Sentius Saturninus governed Syria in 9-7 B.C. He was succeeded by Quinctilius Varus in 7 B.C. At that time Syria was involved in a difficult and responsible war with the Homonadenses. Varus was not a military leader. Consequently, in accord with the Roman practice in other provinces upon occasion, the administration of the internal affairs of the Syrian Government were given to Saturninus, and to Varus after 7 B.C., and Quirinius, the triumphing Roman general, as a special Lieutenant of Augustus, was sent to Syria to hold a joint-administration in foreign affairs, and to conduct the war then in progress. To him, in this capacity, would have fallen naturally the super-

already about the Child, "pondered these things in her heart." The Shepherds were fully satisfied with their recognition of the Divine Child, and returned to their flocks, "glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen" concerning the Son of God.

But even greater cause of astonishment was yet to come before the eyes of Mary and Joseph. They named the Child JESUS, as directed in the original promise of His Birth. At length, they brought the Child for presentation in the Temple. That presentation was the occasion of a new wonder: for the Spirit of God had been directly active in bringing about a recognition of the Son of God by the aged Simeon and Anna, who were providentially guided to the Temple at that time for that purpose.

The record of these events reads as follows: "And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon;⁵ and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the Consolation of Israel: and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed unto him by the Holy Spirit, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came in the Spirit into the Temple: and when the Parents brought in the Child Jesus, that they might do concerning Him after the custom of the law, then (Simeon) received Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said,

(1) Simeon's Recognition of the Son of God

*'Now lettest Thou Thy Servant depart, O Lord,
According to Thy word, in peace;
For mine eyes have seen Thy Salvation,
Which Thou hast prepared
Before the face of all peoples;
A Light for revelation to the Gentiles,
And the Glory of Thy People Israel.'*"

vision of the Imperial order to Herod in Palestine, that the Enrolment of the Jews must be made.

This line of argument places the Birth of Jesus in the year 6 B.C., as time is now counted. That date serves at least to show a harmony between the statements made by Luke and the facts of Roman history outside of his *Gospel*. The total situation, as thus analyzed by Professor Ramsay, shows that Luke very probably stated the exact facts when he dated the event of Christ's Birth in Bethlehem as connected with a first Enrolment of the Jews made at that time under the (Joint-) Administration of Quirinius in Syria.

⁵This Simeon may have been identical with Simeon, the son of the famous Hillel, and father of the scholarly Gamaliel (see *Acts* 5:33-40). If so, Simeon had been elected president of the Sanhedrin in 13 A.D. At the time of this incident, Simeon was supposed to have been about ninety-three years old. See Chapter I, note 30.

Thus the Spirit-led man, prepared by a life of harmony with God's will and Spirit, recognized the Divine Nature of Jesus

immediately upon coming into this presence of the Son of God. Simeon had come to the Temple by Divine plan and direction. Thus there was fulfilled, before the eyes of Mary and Joseph, another prophecy that concerned their Son. Thus there culminated in Him another chain of strangely ordered events from without. Thus there was heard another outburst of praise, exalting the Child Jesus as the Messiah of Israel, and the Savior of the world. Thus was seen another prophetic interweaving of the Birth, and the Divine Nature of Christ, with tangible experiences in other lives hitherto unrelated to the Child. No one will wonder that Mary and Joseph, with increasing astonishment, "were marvelling at the things that were spoken concerning Him."

The Parents marvelled that Simeon so quickly recognized the true Nature of the Son of God. And this amazement would naturally be increased by the two things that were yet to happen on this occasion. The first of these was Simeon's address to Mary and Joseph. The statement is made, that "Simeon blessed them." They could scarcely have failed to notice his careful discrimination in *not blessing the Child Jesus*. In the sense of this benediction, men do not bless a God. After this discriminating benediction, Simeon spoke to Mary at some length about the work and destiny of the Lord Jesus Christ. The message was such as would unfailingly link his prophetic words with other similar prophecies about the Child that were already precious to Mary's wondering heart.

The final incident in this scene was the appearance of Anna, and her testimony to the Infant Savior. She was old, and well seasoned in the service of God. She also, like Simeon, had the apperception of righteousness, which enables the pure in heart to see God. Coming thus, with a discerning spirit, into the presence of the Infant Savior, Anna also immediately recognized that the Child Jesus was the Son of God, and she "spake of Him to all them that were looking for the Redemption of Jerusalem." Thus was wonder added to wonder while the Infant Lord was in the ancient and holy Temple.

But there was still another occasion on which was increased the wonder which had already attached to the Birth and Infancy of the Son of God. The Fact of His Birth, and possibly the

(2) Wonder Magnified in Mary and Joseph

(3) Simeon's Discriminating Benediction

(4) Anna's Testimony concerning the Lord Jesus

miraculous nature of it, had been manifested far beyond the place of its occurrence. Far in the East, the Three Wise Men, if the

**4. Star-Led Journey
of The Wise Men
from the East
Matthew 2:1-12**

traditional number of them is to be accepted, had learned the Fact, through the medium of Prophecy, and possibly also by direct revelation from God. They had "seen His Star in the East, and (had) come to worship Him." Following their Guiding Star, they came to Jerusalem, and called for the Infant "King of the Jews." This form of their inquiry brought them into an encounter with King Herod. But after they had further consulted their Guide-Book of Prophecy, they found the Child Jesus at Bethlehem. They had come to see a *King*. They saw Jesus, and recognized Him as *God*. Then they gave Him worship, such as was fitting to His Divine Character.

Finally, the extraordinary facts of this Child Jesus were brought circumstantially before the jealous and treacherous mind of King Herod. At once Herod's desire was to destroy this Child, said to be "born King of the Jews." But those evil intentions of Herod were thwarted by the higher plans of God. Herod had sought to find Jesus through information had from the Wise Men of the East. But by a dream, sent for that purpose, God directed the Wise Men to go home another way, and thus to avoid meeting again with Herod. By another dream, God directed Joseph to seek safety for the Child in the Land of Egypt. This instruction was in direct fulfillment of another ancient prophecy concerning the Infant Savior.

Thus Herod was thwarted, and should have been instructed. His frenzied massacre of the innocent children of Bethlehem only fulfilled another prophecy in support of the Christ. But Herod was blind to the extraordinary element of the situation: for there was written across the very face of this special providential care of the Child a fact which any but a Herod might have recognized. But Herod had no eyes to see, and no heart to accept. His apperception was only evil for evil. Therefore he blundered on in his conflict with God. At length, Herod stumbled out into outer darkness, leaving the Child of Prophecy free to return to His quiet home in the town of Nazareth.

**5. Providential
Notice to Wicked
King Herod
Matthew 2:1-23**

IV. The Open Declaration by Christ Himself of His Own Divine Nature

One interesting question yet remains concerning the early period of Christ's life. Did Jesus Himself know the secret truth about His own Divine Parentage? Did He grow up, supposing Himself to be the son of Joseph? Did Jesus know at all that He was the Son of God? In His later Life-Work, the Lord Jesus showed a definite consciousness of His eternal pre-existence with His Father in Heaven.⁶ But what shall be said of that consciousness during this earlier period of His life?

The public ministry of Jesus began when He was about thirty years of age. The intervening years, from Childhood to Manhood, were years of growth, and of realization too deep for extended record. Three things only have been recorded out of all that intervening period. However, all of these things bear upon the question now under consideration. Central among these recorded facts, as will presently appear, was the mutual recognition, between Jesus and His Mother, of the fundamental truth about His own Birth.

1. *The Early Natural Development of the Child Jesus.* First, there is a definite statement about the natural development of the Child Jesus during the first part of this early period. This first stage of early development was a preliminary necessity as leading up to the time when the central fact of mutual recognition took place. In Nazareth, as the records have stated, "the Child grew, and

Natural Growth:
Physical, Intellec-
tual, and Spiritual
Matthew 2:23
Luke 2:39-40

waxed strong, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon Him." This brief statement covers the life of Jesus during those ten years between the Return from Egypt and the memorable Visit to the Temple, when Jesus was twelve years of age. But this statement, brief as it is, is a complete record in itself, and quite full enough for clearness, when it is rightly understood.

2. *The Mutual Recognition, between Mother and Son, of the Great Secret of the Lord's Birth.* The right understanding of the above brief record is seen best from the standpoint of the later incident in the Temple. In general, the meaning seems to be

"My Father, and
Your Father; My
God and Your God"
John 20:17
Luke 2:41-50

this. The Birth of Jesus belonged essentially to the Human side

⁶See Chapter I, Section I, 3, (pages 14-17).

of His Nature. Considered on its human side alone, the question of parentage would not arise until a certain degree of maturity had been attained. If the question had arisen earlier, it would have had, humanly speaking, no real significance. Such a question begins to have meaning only with the earlier years of adolescent development.

Speaking humanly, and with great reverence, one may say that this general law of life fits perfectly into the recorded facts in the life of Jesus at that time. In that more tropical country, with its oriental forward development of life, the Lord Jesus, by the age of twelve years, had reached that stage in His human development when the question of parentage might have arisen with significance. With Him the question had arisen. Did He know the secret fact of His Birth? Did Mary even suspect that her Son Jesus knew the secret which she had so long pondered in her own heart?

The answer to this question has been fully recorded. It is found in the story of the Visit of Jesus to Jerusalem when He was twelve years old. This answer, as

1. Setting and Manner of This Recognition

therein revealed, is full of far-reaching significance in its bearing upon the Divine Nature of Jesus Christ. The story is universally

known. Jesus had gone, with His Parents, to the Passover Feast. He had visited the City and the Temple. Later He had been lost from the home-going party. Mary and Joseph had sought for Him diligently, and had at last found Him among the doctors in the Temple, "both hearing them, and asking them questions: and all that heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers."

That is the first part of the story; but that part was only the setting of the stage, as it were, for the central and all-important thing that followed. That central thing was the conversation which took place, there in the Temple, between the Lord Jesus and His Mother. That conversation was made up of an address by the Mother to her Son, and the reply which He made to her.

The Mother's address contained two things. The first was a question, which was asked with an obvious mingling of mother-love and mild remonstrance. When Mary and Joseph saw Jesus in the Temple, they were astonished at Him. Then Mary said, certainly with a tone of anxiety and suppressed complaint, "Son, why hast Thou dealt with us thus?" That was her first thought.

Her second thought was in the form of a statement, which contained an error in point of fact. "Thy *father* and I," she said, "have sought Thee sorrowing." (1) **Mary's Question and Error** She thus spoke of Joseph as the father of her Son Jesus.

The Lord Jesus at once made reply, dealing directly with both of the points in the address of His Mother. His first note was one of wonder, which He expressed in the form of a counter-question. "How is it that ye sought Me?" He said to her. Certainly His words were expressive either of wonder, or of mild reproach. But at what exactly was He wondering? What was the tone and manner of His expression? These questions grow in interest as one more fully realizes the situation. Certainly, also, the thing that Jesus then had in mind was closely related to His next thought. Immediately He corrected His Mother's error of fact. This He did by asking her another question. "Did ye not know," He said to her, "that I must be in *My Father's* house?" Thus, in a gentle but very definite way, Jesus suggested that *God was His Father*.

Mary had forgotten. For the one time in her life, and that but for a moment, Mary had forgotten the secret of her Son's Birth. But that one lapse of memory served to bring to her a profound revelation. Henceforth she was to know that her Son Jesus knew the secret mystery of His own Divine Parentage, and His own consequent Divine Nature. The records say that "they (evidently the company present) understood not the saying which He spake unto them." They knew not the secret which lay back of His words. But how did Jesus know that secret? What must have been the electric effect of His words upon Mary! She had now another wonder of wonders to add to those which she was already pondering in her secret heart.

This conversation shows plainly that Jesus did know the secret of His own Birth. This incident shows also that He was fully aware of what that secret signified as to His own Nature and Personality. The revelation that Jesus Himself knew these things practically completed His Life-Story in this earlier period. This fact, which was so well established, almost rounded out the secret mystery of His Birth, and its great significance for His conscious Personality and His Life-Work.

3. *The Subsequent Growth and Development of Jesus.* One

other fact alone remains to be considered in this preliminary period. That fact is the subsequent growth and development of Jesus into the maturity He had at the age of thirty, when He began His public ministry. This perfect development has been fully accounted for in the two comprehensive statements of Scripture which cover the entire eighteen years in this part of the life of the Lord Jesus Christ.

With Mary and Joseph, Jesus lived in Nazareth. He was subject to the authority of His home-life there. Probably He lived a quiet life, attracting little attention in a public way to Himself. But the many things already mentioned concerning Him, and doubtless many more, His Mother pondered in her heart. "And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men." With the simple statement of these necessary facts, and no more, the sacred Records have swept over those eighteen years of the Savior's life, and brought Him to the age of thirty years, ready to begin the active work of His public ministry.

PART II

THE DIVINE SAVIOR
INTRODUCED TO THE WORLD

THE LOVE OF GOD IN JESUS CHRIST

CALL AND RESPONSE OF DIVINE LOVE

"In the year that King Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the Temple. . . . Also I heard the Voice of the Lord, saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?'"

"Then said I, 'Here am I; send Me.'" "Then said He (Christ), 'Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God.'" *Isaiah 6:1,8, and Hebrews 10:7-9.*

MINISTRY OF DIVINE LOVE

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me; because the Lord hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn, . . . that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified." *Isaiah 61:1-3; Luke 4:18-19.*

PURPOSE OF DIVINE LOVE

"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." *Ephesians 3:17-19.*

REFLECTION OF DIVINE LOVE IN A CHRISTIAN LIFE

"Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is Love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God." *1. John 4:7-15.*

CONSUMMATION OF DIVINE LOVE

"Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My Glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world." *John 17:24.*

CHAPTER III

THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST OPENLY ESTABLISHED

"And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God." John the Baptist, in *John 1:34*.

"But to us there is but . . . one Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom are all things, and we by Him." *1. Corinthians 8:6*.

"He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin." *1. John 3:5*.

"I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." *Philippians 3:8*.

"I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." The Ethiopian Treasurer, in *Acts 8:37*.

Jesus Christ, as set forth in Chapter I, above, was seen to be both God and Man. In His Divine Nature, the Lord Jesus was, from all eternity, the Son of God. In His Divine capacity, He appeared to the ancient world as Jehovah, who was enthroned in Heaven, keeping His covenants with Israel, and doing His sovereign will in the earth, as if both the visible and the invisible worlds belonged to Him. In His Human Nature, the Christ of the ancient world was yet a Hope, and an Expectation. He was to be the Seed of Abraham, and the Royal Son of David. He was to be the Messiah, a great human Deliverer, and Savior, and Benefactor. In Him, both as Jehovah and as Messiah, the ancient Jews were required to believe. In this way, faith was required of them both in the Divine and in the Human aspects of their ultimate Savior.

That was the ancient faith of Israel. But the Christian, accepting the facts analyzed above in Chapter II, has seen the Divine and the Human of the promised Savior combined in the Person of Jesus Christ the Lord. As already seen, He had a perfect human development up to the maturity of thirty years. It will be seen that He was divinely infallible. In all of His Life-Work, the Lord Jesus, Who was both God and Man, never hesitated, never guessed, never doubted, and never erred, either in point of fact or of judgment. The beginning of that remarkable career of certainty and service is the matter of central interest in the present chapter. The first stage in His public ministry was that in which the Divinity of Jesus of Nazareth was openly declared and established before the world.

The point of view in this chapter may be seen clearly in this way. Suppose that *the Son of God* had been born into the world,

as described already in the previous chapter. Suppose, too, that He had grown up to maturity, as He did in fact, comparatively unknown outside of a limited circle of wondering friends in Nazareth. Suppose, further, that Jesus Christ was really a Divine Person sent to save the world. Suppose, finally, that He, at the age of thirty years, had appeared before the world, ready for such a life-work as would be expected of the Son of God. The first natural and necessary thing then would have been an open declaration and establishing of His Divine Nature before those among whom He was about to inaugurate His public ministry.

In other words, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was just ready to step forth before the world upon a stage of activity the most wonderful and effective the world has even seen. He was to astonish men by His miraculous achievements. He was to confound them by His divine wisdom. He was to bless them with His heavenly benedictions. He was to attract them by the winning power of His perfect love and sympathy. And above all else, He was to challenge in them a faith in Him as Savior that would unite them abidingly to Himself. Naturally, therefore, the Lord Jesus would have desired, as He stepped forth upon such a stage of action, an adequate "introduction" to the world-audience to whose interest and faith He was about to address Himself. Naturally, also, He would have desired, when He had stepped out upon that stage, to have it known, with immediate assurance, that He really was the Son of God, and the Divine Savior of the world.

Such an introduction, and such an assurance, would have been the next logical step in the Life-Work of the Son of God. That is exactly what one may find in the Gospels. Those things were the primary interests in that first period of the Lord's public ministry, covered by this chapter. The central purpose of the facts recorded was to have the true nature of the Divine Savior set forth, established, and accepted. The present chapter will consider the principal means by which those results were accomplished.

I. The Preliminary Preaching of John the Baptist

Such a central purpose evidently was in the mind and heart of John the Baptist, whose privilege and honor it was to make the first immediate announcements of the Christ to the world. John, at the beginning of Christ's public ministry, introduced Him to the world. John knew, and he wanted all men to know, that he was presenting to them a Divine Savior, the Son of God.

I. John's Voice in the Wilderness. John was sent for that purpose, with full credentials of his mission. He appeared first in the Wilderness, probably in the regions of the Dead Sea. He came at a time, as Luke has exactly indicated, when the servile relations between the Jewish and the Roman leaders were such as to strangle spiritual life in the City of Jerusalem. The Spirit of God, looking for a really spiritual messenger, sought for him in a place that was far away from the once sacred City.

John came before the public in the habits of his wilderness life. His dress was especially uncouth and unattractive. He came free from all things that might distract from the central spiritual burden of his message. He came in accord with ancient appointment, which had been renewed at the promise of his own birth, and finally made personal in his own direct call from God.¹ His mission was to prepare the minds and hearts of men for receiving the Lord Jesus as the Savior of their souls. John came, therefore, with a definite message, urging the people to repent of their sins, for the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand. He told them to repent, for they should soon see their Lord and Savior face to face.

2. John's Treatment of Particular Classes. John called alike upon all the multitudes who came to his places of preaching. He insisted that Christ was soon to appear among them, and laid directly upon all hearts the responsibility of an immediate moral preparation worthy of the Son of God. John knew well enough that only the pure in heart could see God and that only such as were pure would effectively recognize the Son of God. Therefore John preached repentance, and insisted upon a secret cleansing of hearts before God. That was the central thought of his message at this time: for he knew the people's need that was greatest.

Men of all classes must repent. Knowing the solemn importance of this truth, John hesitated not to make his message both personal and insistent. Looking out upon

1. Treatment of the Ruling Classes: the Pharisees and Sadducees that multitude of sinners, John saw among them the Pharisees and Sadducees. For some reason they attracted his immediate attention. Possibly they had crowded their way up to a place near the front. Possibly they had appeared in groups out

Repentance the Necessary Preparation for Christ
Matthew 3:1-4
Mark 1:1-4, 6
Luke 3:1-6

Matthew 3:5-10
Luke 3:7-14

¹See *Malachi* 4:5; *Luke* 1:15-17; 3:2; *Matthew* 11:7-19; and *Mark* 9:11-13.

in the general crowd. Possibly they had asked him some question: for that was a special privilege which they assumed to themselves on such occasions. Possibly the very ostentatious manner in which they displayed their self-assumed religious superiority at this time attracted special attention to themselves.

Whatever it was that attracted John's first attention in that direction, he saw those rulers of the Jews and he knew them to be the off-spring of vipers. Perhaps they had

(1) Fearless Attitude of John asked some self-revealing question. With definite assurance, John knew their deep and awful need: and he relentlessly pressed home

his challenge to their hearts. Although they were clothed with the outward forms of religious dignity, yet he spared them not.

John told the Pharisees and Sadducees that they must repent. They must face about in heart and life. They must even prove

(2) Unsparing Demand for Repentance, with the Proofs Thereof their heart-sorrow for sin by bringing forth fruits worthy of repentance. No longer can they hide their evil lives behind a formal relation to Abraham, whose children had so long stood high in the favor of God. These

rulers of Israel had forsaken the first condition of God's covenant with their father Abraham, namely, "Walk before Me, and be thou perfect."² They had sinned away any hope of a special claim upon God. Their only hope was in repentance. Therefore John commanded them to repent, to clean up their hearts, and to get their lives right before God. He challenged them to produce such fruits as would prove the genuineness of their inner changes, solemnly warning them that the axe was already laid at the root of the tree.

Such was John's unsparing treatment of those who were generally accorded high rank in the circles of religious respectability.

2. Treatment of the Common People, Publicans and Soldiers The effect upon the general audience was profound. At once there was a stir in the crowd; for men's hearts were pierced with convictions and with fear. The multitudes gathered closer to John, and asked him,

"What then must we do?" Them John received with sympathy, instructing them, and giving practical directions as to what they

But the stir continued: for the audience was deeply moved. Even while John was speaking to the Common People, certain Publicans had pushed their way to the front. "Master," they said,

²Genesis 17:1.
should do.

terrified no doubt by haunting visions of unjust taxes exacted from the poor,—“Master, what must we do?” To them were farmed the Roman taxes. By this arrangement, the Publicans agreed to collect what Rome required, and were then permitted to keep all above that amount that they could extort from the people. Often the measures employed in such extortion were cruel in the extreme. John’s direct answer was an effective test. They must repent, like all others, and their common practices must be stopped.

Then came the Soldiers, with similar inquiries as to what they should do. They, too, were often cruel, unnecessarily cruel, and cruel on their own responsibility. John’s answer again was a test: for he touched these Soldiers at the points of personal responsibility, where their actions were free. As a proof of their right attitude in spiritual life, he advised them to do no violence to any man, and not to exact anything wrongfully, and to be content with their wages. These standards, in their widest application, constitute the cardinal virtues in the free life of the soldier. John considered them sufficient proof of repentance on the part of those inquiring Soldiers.

3. *John’s Exaltation of the Coming Christ.* While John was thus insisting upon a thorough preparation for the Coming of the Son of God, and was baptizing the people for the remission of their sins, his messages stirred the hearts of his hearers in another direction. Great was their expectation as he pressed upon them the immediate need of their being ready to recognize and to receive the Lord Jesus Christ. Enthusiasm ran high, perhaps even approaching wild excitement on the part of those who were most emotional.

“He That Cometh
After Me Is
Mightier Than I”
Matthew 3:11-12
Mark 1:7-8
Luke 3:15-17

Suddenly the situation took a definite turn. From some one in that stirring multitude the suggestion arose, that this John might himself be the Christ, and that he might be expected, at the right moment, to declare himself openly in his true character as the Christ. The suggestion passed from

1. **An Opportune
Suggestion from
the People**

one to another in that vast assembly. The whispered rumor gathered great volume. “All men reasoned in their hearts.” Expectation ran high: for all hearts hung upon the same question. The suggestion came at length to John. Probably it reached him in the form of a timid question, asked by some devout soul near him in the audience. Immediately he saw into the opened minds

and hearts that were looking up to him for an answer to that question.

That was a moment of great opportunity for the speaker. With the high instincts of a great teacher, John did not fail to turn that moment to golden account. In satisfying the common question of the people, John gave his answer a double effectiveness. On the one hand, he used his answer to exalt the Christ, Whom he wished to present to the people. On the other hand, he used his answer to emphasize more than he had yet done the need of careful preparation for the Coming of the Christ, Whom they were so eagerly expecting. This double effect John achieved in his answer by making a series of contrasts between himself and the Lord Jesus Christ.

John was not the Christ. That point John made clear and definite. He was there then: Christ should come later. Their purposes were essentially different. John had come baptizing with water unto repentance, signifying proper preparation for meeting the Son of God. Jesus should baptize with fire, and with the Holy Spirit, signifying a transformed life, and a power for active service. They differed immeasurably in rank and dignity. John was then accounted great among the people; yet he declared himself to be unworthy to untie, or to carry, the shoes of Jesus.

The effect of these contrasts was great; but John had still greater things to say. While they were wondering, he drove deep into their hearts his last great contrast between himself and Jesus. John was only a man, sent to warn the people. Jesus was God, sent to save them, if possible, and to execute righteous judgment. John they might easily escape, and treat with indifference: but they must reckon with Jesus, Whose "fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly cleanse His threshing-floor; and He will gather His wheat into the garner, but the chaff He will burn up with unquenchable fire."

4. *John's Effective Message.* With these strong words, John defined and urged his mission and message. Continuing, "with many other exhortations," he "preached good tidings unto the people." The Common People heard him gladly, and gave heed to his call for repentance. To them his words of mercy were precious and full of hope. But to many, such as most of the Pharisees and Sadducees, his words were distasteful.

2. Perception of a Great Opportunity by a Great Teacher

3. Effective Contrasts between John and Jesus

Counted Worthy to Suffer for Christ Luke 3:18-20

They did not repent, and prepare for recognizing and accepting the Christ. To those who wished to continue in sin, John's message was unwelcome: for he spared none who came within the range of his universal appeals.

John gave sin no quarter, and sinners no rest. His influence reached those in high places. His message invaded the high court of the land. He came, at length, into collision with King Herod, the wicked ruler, who had taken his brother's wife. Two things happened. John administered a direct reproof to that wicked King. The cowardly King, in retaliation, resorted to physical force, and cast John into prison. There are two later events that will show the pathos of this imprisonment.³ Both of them may have been in the mind of Luke, when he declared that this cowardly action of Herod was the very extreme limit of iniquity in that notoriously wicked King.

II. The Divine Testimony to the Divinity of Jesus Christ

The purpose of John was to secure repentance. He wanted men to purify their hearts so that they could see and recognize the Divine Christ when He should appear in their midst. After this introductory work of John, the Lord Jesus stepped forth, as it were, upon His stage of action before the world. Jesus Christ stood forth as a Divine Savior. But was He really Divine? The Lord Jesus paused, as it were for a moment, before entering upon His active ministry, while the Father and the Holy Spirit from Heaven, and the Divinity within Christ Himself, made a manifold answer to that question. The Son of God wanted His world-audience to know that He was Divine, and that they might therefore trust Him with absolute confidence. That is at least one fundamental meaning of the Baptism of Jesus, and of His Temptation, which came just at this time.

1. *The Testimony of the Father in Heaven, and of His Holy Spirit.* While the Son of God paused, as it were, before His universal audience, that all ages might see and know that He was Divine, the first voice that spoke in testimony of Him was a Divine Voice. That was perfectly logical at this time. The Lord Jesus was being baptized into His official ministry, as a fulfillment of technical righteousness. The Spirit of God descended in the visible likeness of a

**"God Also Bearing
Them Witness"**
Hebrews 2:4

Baptism of Jesus
Matthew 3:13-17
Mark 1:9-11
Luke 3:21-23a

³See pages 235-238, and 250.

dove in testimony of the Christ. The Divine Father spoke audibly from Heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased."

The Father's later command, "Hear ye Him," which was given at the scene of the Transfiguration, was omitted at this time. The Son of God was here just entering upon His public ministry. His Divine Nature was, in a sense, on exhibition. Men were given the privilege first of seeing, and of being convinced: then they were commanded to obey.⁴

The Baptism of Christ signified several things; but probably the central of these was this Divine approval which the Son of God had from His Father in Heaven. John has practically confirmed this suggestion, in his later statement of the manner in which he, by the special testimony at the Baptism, came to know the Lord Jesus. This situation, as seen in the light of John's statement, was an adequate setting for this testimony, in which the Father in Heaven publicly announced His only begotten Son to the world. This was the Father's official presentation of His Son as the Divine Savior.

2. *The Self-Assertion of Divinity in Jesus Christ.* The Lord Jesus, as already suggested, stood in the midst of His world-stage, while He was supported by the double testimony of the Father and of the Spirit. But that testimony, even though it was Divine, was objectively given: the Lord Himself was passive at that time. The testimony, of course, was convincing; but it was not all that could be given. The Divine Nature that was in Jesus was yet to speak actively for itself.

There were at least two good reasons for the Temptations of Jesus. First, they vividly set forth the perfect and effective mediatorial righteousness of Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world. The Lord Jesus is the Son of God. That fact had just been established by the external Witness at the Baptism. But was the Son of God such a Savior as men might trust with unlimited confidence? Was He able to save? Was He able to triumph over the uttermost powers of the Kingdom of Darkness? Could He provide a perfect righteousness for the world? To satisfy these important questions, the Divine Savior acted out His own answer before the world. It is written now where all may read: for it is an integral part of His Life-Story,

**"Tempted in All
Points . . . yet
without Sin"**
Matthew 4:1-11
Mark 1:12-13
Luke 4:1-13

**Providing Perfect
Righteousness**

⁴See Chapter I, pages 8-9; and Chapter XIV, pages 331-333.

and of His Life-Work. The whole world, at least potentially so in the plan of salvation, has been permitted to see the Son of God set His Invincible Strength against the Enemy of all that is good. In the fullest sense, men know that Christ is able to save, because they have seen Him "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

That was one reason for the Temptations. But the second reason supports an even stronger confidence in the Son of God.

The Temptations and the Victory, in themselves, were imposing. But the real point of the whole situation was this. Jesus Christ was there acting in His Divine integrity as the self-consistent Son of God. Such action on His part was consciously and definitely His own highest defense of His own Divine Nature. "If Thou art the Son of God," said Satan. Well indeed did Satan know that all would have to turn on that one question.

Satan therefore made his attacks at that point. They were three in number, and have their inner logical significance best revealed in the order of events as given by Matthew. In order to overthrow the Divinity of Christ, Satan tried to accomplish three different things, any one of which would have been sufficient for his purposes.

The First Temptation was an effort on the part of Satan to bring the Son of God down to the purely human. Taking advantage of the physical situation, as the Gospel Records have emphasized, Satan very cunningly challenged Jesus, *if He were the Son of God*, to satisfy His own hunger by an exercise of His divine power in this personal way, and for this self-interested purpose. But the answer of Jesus settled two points definitely. It reached far beyond the merely physical, and even beyond the merely human.

First, however, the reply of Jesus did involve the human. From that point of view, He could not deny His own Divine Nature. Even as a Man, Christ must believe the Word of God; and that Word, since ancient times, had declared the Promised Messiah to be a Divine Person, the Son of God. Moses, and the Prophets, and the

(1) Christ As Human Must Believe Himself Divine

Psalms had spoken of the Lord Jesus Christ. Men as men have always been required, as a condition of spiritual welfare, to accept the whole truth of God, which includes, as an important element,

the Divinity of Jesus Christ. On the human level, therefore, Christ gave to Satan an adequate answer. Men must believe the Scriptures, and therefore must believe that Jesus was Divine.

The Lord's real reply, however, was made on the higher level of His Divine Nature. As the Son of God, Christ answered

**(2) Christ as Divine
Must be Self-Con-
sistent**

Satan. As such, the Lord had already spoken volumes in the Word of God. Already the Christ was self-declared to be Divine. Even Man must abide by the Word of God: much more must the Son of God Who spoke that Word. That is, Christ said in effect, that a Divine Person, as He was, could be *satisfied* only by a *complete consistency* within Himself at all times. He was already self-declared to be Divine. He could not say one thing, and then seem to be another. The Son of God was a Divine Person, "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

Thus the Lord Jesus effectively declared that He was not a mere man, as Satan had hoped to have appear in this First Temptation. Failing to gain this point, Satan immediately shifted the point of view of his attack. He had to accept the conclusive force of the answer which Christ had given. Satan therefore adapted his next approach in keeping with the Divine Nature of the Person with Whom he was dealing.

The Second Temptation was on the level of the Divine. Satan tried in this attack to discredit the Divine Nature of Christ by breaking down the divine consistency which

**2. Second Tempta-
tion: Effort to
Break Down the
Divine Consistency
of Christ**

He had claimed. Accordingly, Satan planned a Second Temptation so that it would begin where the First had left off. He took Christ up to the pinnacle of the Temple, and commanded Him, saying, "If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down." Satan supported his command with this cunningly misquoted Scripture: "For it is written, 'He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee: and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone.' "

Satan misquoted this passage, as any one may see by comparison with the original.⁵ It was written, that the angels shall have

"charge . . . to keep Thee *in all Thy ways*." But His ways were the ways of God, if He was consistent as the Son of God.

But that thought, which was the very point at issue in this Temptation, Satan had omitted from the quotation.

⁵See *Psalm* 91:11, 12.

What he did was this. He laid the mutilated passage before the Son of God, Who had strongly intimated, in the First Temptation, His own authorship of the earlier Scriptures. Then Satan said, in effect: "Your Lordship has said *that* about Yourself. Will you put that Scripture to test? Cast Yourself down from this pinnacle, and see whether the angels will come to Your support!"

Satan aimed his attack directly at the *complete-consistency* argument of Christ's answer in the First Temptation. Satan intended to deceive Christ. This Satan could not do, if Christ was the Son of God. Satan tried to entrap, and thus to discredit, Christ in respect to His Divine Nature. This Satan could not do, since Christ was the Son of God. The entire event was on the higher level of the Divine. In its widest reaches, this Temptation involved the whole question of complete harmony between the Life-Work of Jesus Christ and the things which God had *willed*, and *planned*, and *revealed* concerning His Son as the Savior of the world.

Therefore the Son of God made no hesitation in His answer. With quick discernment, He replied to Satan, touching exactly the central point of his attack. Christ said, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Those eight words, quoted from the ancient Word of God, were an effective answer.⁶ Satan saw that he could not affect the Divine Nature of Christ. He could neither debase It to the level of the merely human; nor could he break the bond of Its sacred and consistent continuity. His only hope, therefore, was to have the Lord Jesus renounce His own Divinity, to bow down, and sell out for a price.

The Third Temptation was a direct attack, seeking for a contradiction of Christ's Divine Nature. Yet this last attack contained an appeal which was in line, as Satan desired it to appear, with Christ's mission to establish a Kingdom in the world. Satan saw that his only hope was to bend the Divine Nature of Jesus, which was beyond his power to affect otherwise, into a compromise of Itself. Thus by a direct appeal Satan hoped to break down the very Nature of the Lord Jesus Christ.

For the ambitious price of a few worldly kingdoms, Satan hoped that the Son of God would sell out. Therefore, as the

(2) Christ's Effective Answer to Satan

3. Third Temptation: Effort to Secure a Compromise of the Lord's Divinity

⁶See Deuteronomy 6:16.

records have said, "The Devil taketh Him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto Him,

(1) **Satan's Ambitious Offer of Worldly Dominion** 'All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me.'" Any

reference to the Divinity of Christ in connection with this proposition would have carried an unpromising suggestion from the Tempter's point of view. Satan saw this fact, and omitted from this temptation the reference to Divine Sonship, which he had used in the previous temptations.

But neither Satan's ambitious offer, nor his clever manner of putting his proposition, would bring him success. The thing suggested was repulsive to the Son of God.

(2) **Christ's Scorning of Satan's Suggestions** Satan had hoped to make of Christ a worshiper. That would have annulled His Divinity. Satan even suggested that Christ

worship Satan. That was worse than blasphemy. Satan offered the price of kingdoms. But Christ's Divine Nature scorned the idea of compromise. "Get thee hence, Satan!" That was the Lord's ready and adequate answer. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve!"

That was the final word. Satan was summarily dismissed. The vigorous spirit of this final reply shows how profoundly the Lord Jesus resented this last attack. There are suggestions in the records of still other temptations. But the logic of the situation was complete in this final answer of the Lord Jesus. And Matthew has beautifully added, that, when Satan was gone, angels did come and minister to Jesus.

III. The Direct Witness of John to the Divinity of Christ

The Lord Jesus stood, as it were, yet a while longer before the world, so that all men might see and know that He was a Divine Savior. The Divine Witnesses to His Divine Nature have already spoken: first, the Witness from Heaven at the Baptism; and later, the self-assertion of His Divine Nature Itself in the Temptations. But there were other witnesses to follow before the Lord should begin His active ministry. The next testimony was that of John the Baptist, who bore direct witness to the Nature of Christ on two separate occasions.

1. *The Witness of John the Baptist before the Priests and Levites.* The first occasion for this special testimony by John

was the presentation to him of an inquiry from the Pharisees, through a deputation of priests and Levites. The incident occurred before John's imprisonment, and while he was yet preaching. The power and reputation of John was felt far and wide. Some said that he was Elijah returned to the earth. Others said that he was *The Prophet*. Some even suggested that John was the Messiah.

"He Shall Go before Him in the Spirit and Power of Elijah"
John 1:19-28

The Pharisees were uncertain about John, and probably ill at ease before his searching power. They desired to satisfy themselves more definitely. Therefore they had sent the priests and Levites to ask John directly who he was, and what he was.

In answering this inquiry, John defined himself in his essential character as the Fore-Runner of the Christ. John knew the tendency of the Jews to make an outward show of their religion, whereas they needed to give more attention to the sincerity of their hearts. Perhaps it was the weight of this deepest of all national needs, felt so keenly in his own heart, that caused John, on this occasion, to reduce himself to a mere *voice*, and that *the voice of one crying in the wilderness*. But John did not fail to emphasize that the mission of that voice was to herald the Coming of the Lord. In response to further questions about his own mission and work, John announced the Christ, saying, "in the midst of you standeth One Whom ye know not," and exalted Him as far superior to John, whom all counted great, and some thought to be the Messiah.

2. *The Witness of John the Baptist before the People.* "On the morrow he seeth Jesus coming unto him," and John then gave his second great direct testimony to the Divine Nature of Jesus Christ. John, when he saw Jesus approaching, perhaps still at some distance away, said to those who were present, "Behold, the Lamb of God, Which taketh away the sin of the world!" Then, while Jesus was coming near, John told the People that this was the Divine Savior, of Whom he had spoken to them before.

"This Is the Son of God"
John 1:29-34

Continuing to speak of the basis of his own immediate confidence in the Lord Jesus, John revealed some interesting facts which are not otherwise known. He pointed back to the Baptism of Jesus, and particularly to the incident of the Spirit's descending in the likeness of a dove, and abiding on Jesus at that time. John here declared that visible appearance of the Spirit to be a pre-arranged sign from Heaven, sent for John's special benefit.

Very appropriately, this Sign was used as a means of enabling John to know, definitely and immediately, that the Person then before John was the Divine Savior of the world. To his attentive hearers at this time, John declared that he had seen the appointed Sign of the Spirit on the previous occasion; and that he had thus recognized the Savior. By this time, the approaching Lord had drawn near to the speaker. John therefore brought his former experience and his present testimony together into these words of final assurance: "I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God." In John's powerful convictions and testimony, there was no doubt about the Divinity of Jesus Christ.

IV. The Convictions That Christ Was Divine Which Arose from Personal Experience with the Son of God

Hitherto the Divine Nature of Jesus has been supported by testimony of a more formal character. The witnesses were cited, as it were, to appear, and they gave their several testimonies to the world-audience before whom Jesus had come. But the final witness to the Lord's true Nature was the informal and irresistible testimony that arises in the hearts of men from personal experience. When men came into close personal touch with Jesus Christ, they knew right well that He was the Son of God, and the Divine Savior of the world.

1. Fellowship with Christ That Brought Conviction. The first contribution of this concrete type of evidence now on record was an experience with the Lord Jesus in which personal fellowship with Him brought conviction. This experience occurred on the morrow after John had first pointed out the Lamb of God. Seeing Jesus again, John said to the two of his disciples who were then present, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" This time, however, the indication was made in some effective way to cause the two disciples of John to leave him and follow Jesus. Between the Lord and these new followers, some friendly questions were passed as to His Own identity. To satisfy their honest hearts, the Lord invited His new disciples into close fellowship with Himself. They accepted the invitation; and their personal experience with Him soon crystallized into the firm conviction that they had found the Messiah.

These were the first disciples on record whom Jesus called definitely into friendly personal acquaintance with Himself. "One

**Call and Conviction
of the First Three
Disciples**
John 1:35-42

of the two that heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He findeth first his own brother

1. First Call of Andrew and Simon Peter Simon, and saith unto him, 'We have found the Messiah (which is, being interpreted, the Christ).' He brought him unto Jesus. Jesus

looked upon him, and said, 'Thou art Simon the son of John: thou shalt be called Cephas (which is by interpretation, Peter).' This instance of Divine Insight on the part of Jesus must have made a deep impression upon the mind and heart of Peter; and his new name, being constantly repeated, would keep alive in his heart the significant appeal which Jesus had thus addressed to this new disciple.

Possibly there were four disciples brought to Jesus in this first group. John the Baptist had turned the heart of one other

2. Possible First Call of James and John disciple to Jesus along with Andrew. It is almost certain that that other disciple was either James or John. The suppression of the name in the narrative might argue that it

was John; and the words, "findeth *first* his own brother Simon," seem strongly to imply that there was an additional search (and probably with later success) for another brother, or *the other* brother. However, the absence of any record at all, beyond the implications of the words quoted above, may suggest, with equal force, that John was here suppressing a personal reference to the manner in which he had himself been brought to Jesus by his own brother James, or possibly by Andrew himself.

2. Recognition of Christ's Divine Insight That Brought Conviction. More remarkable, perhaps, was the conviction as to

Call and Conviction of Philip and Nathanael Christ's Divine Nature that arose from the recognition of His Divine insight. The occasion for this recognition had already occurred, when Andrew brought his brother Simon to Jesus, and the Lord changed the

John 1:43-51 name of Simon to Peter. The occasion was still more pronounced in connection with the Call of Philip and Nathanael.

When Philip was called to follow Jesus, he did so immediately, and was profoundly convinced concerning the character of the Lord. One of the first activities of Philip under this new discipleship was to find Nathanael, and to assure him that Philip and the previously named disciples had found the Messiah. Nathanael was in doubt, and began to raise objections to the idea of the Messiah's coming out of Nazareth. But Philip was not interested in that debate. He had been with Jesus; and the result

was a faith that did not doubt. Philip knew from personal experience. Therefore he brushed aside all questionings, and challenged Nathanael only to "Come and see."

When Nathanael came, and saw, he was also convinced. Scarcely had he come into the presence of Christ, when He, with divine insight, pronounced upon the hidden character of Nathanael. "Behold," said Christ, "an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" To deepen this conviction which He had produced in the mind and heart of Nathanael, Jesus pointed out certain significant things which had recently taken place in the life of Nathanael. The effect of this Divine Insight was overwhelming. In the full assurance of positive truth, Nathanael exclaimed, "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God! Thou art the King of Israel!" Nathanael's faith was clear and strong; but Jesus gave assurance that Nathanael should "see greater things than these," which would make even stronger his faith in the Son of God.

3. *Observing the Divine Power of Christ Brought Conviction.* Finally, in this series of witness-bearing events, conviction as to the Divine Nature of Jesus was brought to

**First Miracle: the
Water Made into
Wine
John 2:1-11**

all those who observed the working of Divine Power in Him when He wrought His first miracle. This was the miracle at Cana in Galilee, where Jesus turned the water into wine for the wedding feast. The story of that event is so familiar that it needs not to be recited at this time.

This story was recorded; not for the purpose of showing the power of Christ, but rather to show the convincing effect of His power upon those who witnessed the miracle. This truth is emphasized in the two significant points that are made at the conclusion of this story. The first point is that this beginning of miracles by Jesus was a manifestation of His Divine Glory. The second point is that this manifestation of His Glory was seen as such by the people; and by it their faith in Him was profoundly deepened. Through this exercise and exhibition of His Divine Power. His disciples saw deeper into the depths of His Divine Personality, and more than ever believed in Him as the Son of God.

Through the several means already analyzed, the Divinity of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was set before the world at the beginning of His public ministry. Ancient Prophecy, fulfilled in John, contributed a convincing introduction. Divine Witnesses appeared, in the Presence of the Spirit and the Voice of the Father at the Baptism, and in the self-assertion of Christ's

own Divine Nature in His Temptations. After those events, John the Baptist came forward again with his personal testimony, which was borne before some indifferent hearts, and before some who were prepared for accepting the Lord Jesus Christ. Finally, there was a panorama of personal experiences with the Lord Himself. In all of these experiences, those who came into close personal touch with the Savior were all fully convinced that Jesus Christ was indeed the Son of God.

With this initial momentum of conviction in the hearts of men, the Lord Jesus was ready to begin His great active ministry as the Savior of the world. It was necessary that He first be seen and fully recognized as a Divine Savior. With the building up of this introductory conviction, the present chapter has dealt exclusively. It is fully recognized that Christ probably wrought salvation in many individuals while He was building up this volume of conviction.

This preparatory survey has now been made. This section of the Lord's Life-Work closes with *John 2:12*, in which there is one fact more to be observed. Mention is there made of a temporary sojourn of Jesus at Capernaum. The fact was probably mentioned here because that City became later the permanent home of the Lord Jesus during His public ministry.

CHAPTER IV

THE WAY OF LIFE DEFINED

"And this is His commandment, That ye should believe on the Name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as He gave us commandment." *1. John 3:23.*

"Jesus saith unto him, 'I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.' " *John 14:6.*

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under Heaven given among men, whereby ye must be saved." *Acts 4:12.*

"God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." There is therefore but one possible Savior, "Christ Jesus, Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." He has been made a Sin-Offering for us, "that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." "So then every one of us shall give an account of himself to God." "And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men . . . (to) be reconciled to God."

But "the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost." Christ has said, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man will hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in unto him." "Without Me," said Christ, "ye can do nothing." "But," said Paul, "my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." Putting this assurance to the test enabled Job to say, "I know that my Redeemer liveth," and Paul to testify that "for me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." "Let not your heart be troubled," said the Savior. "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." "Incline your ear, and come unto Me: hear, and your soul shall live."¹

The active ministry of Christ, strictly speaking, began with a

¹The Scriptures quoted in the first two paragraphs are as follows: *1. John 5: 11-12; Romans 6:23; 1. Corinthians 1:30; 2. Corinthians 5:21; Romans 14:12; 1. Peter 4:18; 2. Corinthians 5:11, 20; Luke 19:10; Revelation 3:20; John 15:4; Philippians 4:19; Acts 16:31; Job 19:25; Philippians 1:21; John 14:1-3; and Isaiah 55:3.*

definition of the Way of Life. This definition, which was in keeping with the Scriptures quoted above, was the logical requirement of the situation: for men were ready to walk in the Way of Life, if only they knew how to walk in that way. Therefore the Lord defined that Way of Life, concretely and yet somewhat formally, in the next series of events recorded in His own Life-Story.

The definition was timely: for the people were ready. The Son of God, as seen in the previous chapter, had stepped out before the world as a Divine Savior. Very naturally, the interested world was asking one question: "What must we do to be saved?" Christ had come to give life. He was seen to be Divine, and therefore able to

**"Sirs, What Must
We Do To Be
Saved?"**
Acts 16:30

give the life that He promised. But every devout soul wanted an answer to this question: "How may I come into saving relations with this Divine Savior?" They wanted to know how a Divine Savior and an unsaved soul might be brought together effectively for salvation. Such a question in the popular mind was both logical and inevitable, in view of the facts brought out in the previous chapter; and the Lord's answer to that universal question will be the central theme of the present chapter.

However, before analyzing those events through which the Lord has clearly defined the Way of Life, it will be well to look for a moment at that larger conception of the saved life which must be kept in mind if one would adequately understand the Lord's true message through those events.

**True Conception
of a Saved Life:
Grace and Service**

Salvation, as rightly considered, is a thing that comes full circle in the experience of him who is saved. That conception obtains always in the thought of Christ, and throughout the Word of God.

Salvation, in its fullest sense, always involves both a *receiving of grace* and a *response in service*. Man is saved to serve. There must be an *intake*, and also an *outflow* of spirit-life in salvation. The grace of God comes; but the grace of service must follow. Salvation *received* must also be *worked out*, even with fear and trembling: so great are the responsibilities on the outflowing side of a saved life. "Freely ye have received, freely give," is God's standard for externalizing the spiritual blessings of life in concrete daily living.

The saved life has two fundamental connections. There is, on the receiving side of such a life, a vertical, overhead connection

between the soul and God, which must be established through the mediation of Jesus Christ. This connection calls for faith:

for the soul of Man can come to God only through Christ, Who is the only Savior, and the one Mediator between God and Man.

On the responsive side of the saved life, there is both a vertical relation to God, and a horizontal relation to Man. These will be discussed at greater length later in this chapter. For the present, the central interest of this study will be in the receiving side of life, and in its overhead connections with God, from Whom comes life itself, and all of the blessings that enrich the best life that is possible.

I. The Way of Life: the Receiving Side of Salvation

The events considered in this chapter present the Way of Life, first, on its receiving side. Those that believe on the Lord Jesus Christ are saved. Salvation is a work wrought on them and in them. It is the work of God, Whose grace comes into the soul that is saved. There is a new life in that soul. That new life is spiritual. It is eternal, and eternally blessed. With this new life, there comes a new thought, a new attitude, and a new spirit in life, and toward life. The whole life is new, renewed in Christ Jesus, and by the grace of God. There is a personal application, made by God Himself, of those things which He has done, in and through Jesus Christ, for the saving of lost souls.

The soul is saved. But that which comes from God to make up the blessedness of a saved life is too much for precise definitions. However, it must not be forgotten, that all of those things which belong to the receiving side of salvation have their definite conditions; and, further, that those conditions, which are both negative and positive, must be observed. They define the matters of gravest concern to men: for they define the negative and the positive conditions of salvation.

1. *The Negative Conditions of Salvation.* On the receiving side of salvation, the negative conditions are those that will not save: those that will not bring salvation. Negative conditions, as here considered, represent things that hinder the best life: things that will sometimes prevent salvation altogether, unless they are removed.

Sin of all kinds tends to shut the doors of life. Spiritual indifference is also fatal to the soul. But negative conditions may even be religious in character. They even assume sometimes the

external appearances of genuine religion. They represent a formal relation to God, which oftentimes, in the care that is

**1. Inadequacy of
Merely Formal
Relations to God as
the Basis of
Salvation
John 2:13-17**

given to external considerations, looks well enough, and even deceives people into believing that it is effective.

Such was the deceptive type of negative conditions which the Savior took up first in His treatment of the Way of Life. That condition was religious in character. But it was formal, ineffective, and fatal. By more than strong implications, the Savior taught, in the incident now under consideration, that conditions of life, to be effective, must first of all be based upon relations with God, and with His Son, that are both sincere and spiritual.

The occasion of this first lesson was that incident in which the Son of God expelled the merchandising Jews from the Temple of

**(1) Salvation Re-
quires Sincerity**

God. Those Jews doubtless considered themselves religious. They even held a sort of active formal relation to their religion and its services. They furnished the necessities for the services of the Temple. Doubtless they were doing these things in the name of religion. They probably thought themselves sincere, and would have declared their money-making interests only an incident in a total situation that was essentially religious.

But Jesus saw that situation in a different light. Their religion, as He saw it, was lacking in that element which would make of it even a valid condition of spiritual life. Their religion was void of the spirit of sincerity. They were deceiving themselves into believing that they were religious; but, as a matter of fact, they were only busy with the external forms of religion.

Consequently, they were driven from the House of God. Their merchandise, of course, had no proper place in the Temple. But

**(2) Salvation Re-
quires Spirituality**

far deeper than this external impropriety, was the want of spirituality in the hearts of those whom the Lord drove out from the Sanctuary. They had turned the Father's House into a common shop. This fact showed them to be without the *spirit* and *truth* necessary for right relations with God. Concern for the things of religion is not sufficient. There must be a genuine spiritual content in the relations with God that are at all acceptable to Him or beneficial to men.

This was the truth that stood out emphatically in the situation

now under consideration. The formalized Jews who were being driven from the Temple did not see this truth. But the Disciples of Jesus saw it. They were spiritually minded. Therefore they understood that the Lord was here teaching the necessity of spirituality in religion, which defines Man's relations to God. To them this drastic treatment meant a consuming spirituality, such as was described in the ancient Scripture which said, "The Zeal of Thine House shall eat me up."²

That expulsion from the Temple was vigorous treatment. But Jesus was not yet done with the subject of formalism in religion.

2. Failure of Formal Relations under Spiritual Tests
John 2:18-22

From this first encounter with the organized religion of the Jews, the Lord Jesus began to emphasize the test of all spiritual relationships in life. That test is ever a spiritual test. To this truth the Lord gave a powerful concrete expression when He subjected the remaining Jews who were left in the Temple to the test of spiritual discernment. They had demanded of Him a "sign" of His authority, in that He had expelled their fellow-formalists from the Temple. But Jesus gave them something far better than a sign. He subjected them to a spiritual test, which proved conclusively the correctness of what He had done.

Spiritual things are spiritually discerned. Under this principle, the Lord subjected the Jews that remained in the Temple to one

(1) Spiritual Tests Prescribed by Christ for the Jews

direct spiritual suggestion; and they *failed*, miserably failed. "Destroy this temple," said Christ, "and in three days I will raise it up." This statement was only a figurative allusion to His own Death and Resurrection: facts with which the leaders of Israel were supposed to be familiar, and would have been familiar, if they had read the Word of God with sympathetic spiritual understanding.

But they failed under this simple test. They had no suggestion, as it seems, that the Lord meant anything spiritual by His statement. They were too busy with the *things* of religion ever to get at the inner spirit of God's Word, or to discern the Son of God standing then in their midst. They had no conception of the ancient truth of His Saviorship through death and the Resurrection.

However, the words of this test were not forgotten. There were, in fact, two distinct memories of this event. The Lord's

²Psalms 69:9.

statements about the "temple" were remembered by the Disciples, who evidently saw that His words had a spiritual significance.

(2) **Two Memories of the Lord's Words in This Test** They therefore treasured His words in their hearts, as a support to their faith, in the days of full understanding, when these words should be fulfilled completely in the Lord's Resurrection from the dead.

The Jews also remembered those words of the Lord Jesus, and persistently gave to them a blind and sordid literal interpretation. "Forty and six years," they said in derision,—“Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt Thou raise it up in three days!” These words of the Jews showed how utterly blind they were to spiritual truth, and to the Divine Personality of the Lord Jesus standing then before their eyes. The Jews kept these words in mind, and made the literal interpretation of them the basis of repeated charges against the Lord Jesus in His later Life-Work.³

These things took place within the House of God. The sacred setting added a more solemn suggestiveness to the truths held forth by the Son of God. One group of the Jews, busy with the materials and visible *things* of religion, had been expelled from the House of God. The other group, similarly busy with the ceremonial and invisible *things* of religion, had been tested, and found wanting in that spirituality which is becoming to the House of God. The mere formalities in religion, even when found in the House of God, could never satisfy the demands of a vital spiritual relationship with God.

This truth is of universal application. Mere concern for the *things* of religion, whether seen or unseen, is not sufficient, not even when that concern causes men to engage actively in formal religious performances. God wants the spirit and the heart of man to be rightly engaged. Indifference to spiritual relations with God is fatal to the soul. Lack of spirituality is equally fatal. The substitution of any thing else is impossible. Spiritual, in sincerity and in truth, must be every relation of the soul to God, and to His Son, Jesus Christ. Thus it was that Christ, touching the negative side of salvation, swept away, in this one situation, the supreme hindrance of men in finding the Way of Eternal Life.

2. *The Positive Conditions of Salvation.* From the negative side of life, Christ turned, in the next recorded events, to the positive side. He dealt next with those conditions that do bring

³See pages 531, 532, 596-598, and 643.

about, and do support, a saving relation with Himself as Savior, and with His Father in Heaven. In presenting those positive conditions, Christ told, first, what spiritual life means, and then explained how that life might be attained.

First in His thought, was the definition of spiritual life. What is a saved life? What is meant by salvation? What effects are produced by establishing a saving relation with Jesus Christ? What meaning is wrought into the life of him who is saved? The answer to all of these questions was given by the Savior in His discourse with Nicodemus.

1. What is Salvation, and the Saved Life?

John 2:23-25
and 3:1-13

Salvation, as defined in that discourse, is an effect that results from two concurrent causes. First, a saved life is a *new life*. "Ye must be born again." That thought was the first point emphasized in the Lord's definition before Nicodemus. A saved soul is a "new creation," which is created anew in Christ Jesus. This new spiritual birth is a mystery. That fact the Lord Himself readily granted. But the fact of mystery should not hinder confidence in the thing that actually happens. Life is full of mysteries which are readily accepted. Even the commonest physical phenomena, as the Lord pointed out, are not fully understood; and yet they are accepted, and acted upon in everyday life.

So it is in salvation. Man must be born again, born of the Spirit of God. There is mystery. But there is fact. There must be a spiritual re-birth of the soul. There must be such an effect wrought by the Spirit of God as will enable the redeemed child of God to look up, with a new sense of reality, to God as a loving Father. Perhaps this new birth can be understood only in terms of an intimate personal experience. However that may be, the new birth of the soul, which is born again by the power of God's regenerating Spirit, is the first fact in salvation. The Lord Himself has said, "Ye must be born again."

Salvation, as here defined in the second place, is the *effect of faith in Christ*. The new birth is itself the work of God; but faith as a necessary condition is required of men. John the Apostle, in the early verses of his Gospel, had already announced the same truth. He said of Christ, "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power (the right) to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name: which

(2) Salvation the Result of Faith in Christ

were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”⁴

Christ came into the world to give such newness of life to those who believe on Him. That was His mission, appointed to Him by His Father. So it was that Christ, when speaking to Nicodemus, emphasized this truth. The whole plan of salvation contemplated such a newness of life as a result of faith in Christ. “Even so,” said Christ, “must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him may have eternal life.” Such was the Lord’s own definition of a saved life,—a new birth resulting from faith in Christ, and wrought by His Spirit.

How, then, is salvation to be attained by the individual? The answer to that question has been suggested already under the definition given above. But that answer

2. How May Salvation Be Attained?

John 3:14-21

was developed more fully in the continuation of the discourse with Nicodemus. Salvation, as Christ pointed out, comes to the individual as a provision of God’s free grace, which is offered to the world through Jesus Christ, and received by personal faith in Him. That truth was clearly stated in these words: “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world: but that the world through Him might be saved.”

Salvation, according to this exposition, requires personal acceptance of Jesus Christ as a personal Savior. Salvation apart from Christ is impossible. “He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the Name of

(1) Salvation Requires Personal Faith in Christ

the only begotten Son of God.” That truth is heavily emphasized in the Scriptures which are placed at the head of this chapter. Souls are saved through Jesus Christ, Who is the only Way of Approach to the Father in Heaven.

Salvation demands, for God and righteousness, the supreme love of life. That is the test of an effective faith. Men must love light rather than darkness, good and not

(2) Salvation Requires the Supreme Love of Life

evil, truth and not error, God and not sin. For them to live must be Christ, if they would be saved. Facing the question of accepting Christ, every individual must turn his decision upon this

⁴See John 1:12-13, and the analysis of this passage in Chapter I, page 38. See also Chapter XXVI, notes 1 and 2.

single point: "Where, and what, is the supreme love of my life? Where is my treasure, and my heart?" Even more exactly stated: "Do I love God and righteousness supremely, or is my heart divided with sin?" Such a man, loving truth and right supremely, will consciously need Christ, want Christ, and definitely accept Christ, Who is the Savior from sin. But if the man's heart is attached to sin, then he will turn from Christ into darkness and the ways of sin. He will love the one and hate the other.

Salvation, then, as Christ taught on this occasion, is to be attained only by a personal acceptance of the Lord Jesus as one's own Savior. Faith in Him must be definite, and proved by the test of the supreme love of life. Such faith brings the grace of God, and the new life, to the individual. That is salvation.⁵

3. *The Conditions of Life Confirmed by John the Baptist.* Christ had already expounded the Way of Life, on its receiving side, to Nicodemus. That was the highest possible authority on the subject. With the views that were expressed by Christ, John the Baptist was in full agreement, in his testimony to Christ, and in his discussion of the Way of Life, in Aenon, near Salim, where he was baptizing.

**Testimony of John
as to Christ and
the Way of Life
John 3:22-36
and 4:1-2**

The occasion was one of considerable excitement. The time was before the imprisonment of John by Herod. The place was Aenon, near Salim, where John was baptizing. Many people had come to hear John, and probably to be baptized by him. Already his previous testimony to Christ was bearing fruit. His own disciples were turning to the Lord Jesus. Such results were as John would have them to be.

However, on this occasion, a debate had arisen, out in the crowd, between John's disciples and the Jews. The question up for debate was that of purifying. Feeling was running high. Probably, for want of effective arguments, the Jews were taunting John's disciples in Aenon with the fact that his other disciples beyond Jordan were turning to Jesus. At length the situation was referred to John himself, in these words: "Rabbi, He that was with thee beyond Jordan, to Whom thou hast borne witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to Him."

⁵For a full discussion of the Plan of Salvation, see the statement of the Covenants in Chapter XX, Note 6.

That appeal to John was his cue for an open and formal statement of the Way of Life through Jesus Christ. That statement

**2. Substance of
John's Testimony
John 3:27-36**

John did not hesitate to make. His response was clear and definite; and, as the situation required, his message contained two important definitions.

First, as was both proper and logical at that time, John defined again the relations that existed between him and the Lord Jesus

**(1) John's Proper
Exaltation of
Christ**

Christ. Again John exalted Christ as the Lord and Savior. As for himself, John declared that he was only a commissioner from Heaven, appointed to be the advance herald of the Christ. John explained that his own joy was "fulfilled" when he saw his own disciples turning to Jesus. John concluded his exaltation of Christ with this prophecy: "He must increase, but I must decrease."

Having properly exalted Christ, John began to define the way of Life through Christ. Again his thought was very clear and

**(2) John's View of
Life Through
Christ**

definite: for John knew the truth, and spoke it without fear. It is remarkable that John put into his definition of the Way of Life substantially the same outline of thought as that set forth in the previous chapters of this book.

First, John insisted that Jesus was of Heavenly origin, and was therefore "above all." He argued, further, that Jesus had both the Heavenly testimony and the convictions of men which had arisen from personal experience with the Lord, as a support of His Divine Nature and Character. Finally, John declared that Jesus was standing even then before the world as the only Savior, into Whose hands the Father "hath given all things."

This Savior, as John testified, is standing at the dividing point of every man's destiny. "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that believeth (obeyeth) not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." With these final words of re-assuring grace, and of fearful warning, the Way of Life, on its receiving side, was rounded out into a completed definition. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

II. The Way of Life: the Giving Side of Salvation

But Salvation has another side, the giving side, the responsive side. The circle of life is not complete without response. There must be an outflowing of the spirit-life of the saved soul. Saving grace received into the heart must find a suitable expression in daily life. The man who has been saved must render back to God an active service for the salvation which He has provided. That is the law of life, the law of right, the law of love, and the law of gratitude. It is therefore the law of God. Salvation is for service.

**"What Shall I
Render Unto the
Lord for All His
Benefits Toward
Me."
Psalm 116:12**

The responsive side of the saved life, as previously stated in this chapter, has two fundamental connections,—the vertical connection with God, and the horizontal connection with Mankind. To the first of these connections is attached the First Great Commandment, which requires the supreme love of life in devotion to God. To the second connection belongs the Second Great Commandment, which says, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."⁶ About these two basic relations of life, therefore, there is gathered all the Law and the Prophets. There are these two channels of expression, and only these two, through which the spirit-life of Man may express itself.

Both forms of expression are forms of service to God. Through the vertical channel, the spirit of service reaches upward to God in praise, and adoration, and worship. Of course, God is not "worshipped with men's hands, as though He needed anything." But God does receive, and command, and require, the undivided love, and adoration, and worship of men's lives. Through the other channel, the spirit-life finds an adequate outgoing in love and service to the world of need. This also is a service to God, an indirect but definite service to Him. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren," said the Lord, "ye have done it unto Me."

The saved soul responds in worship and in work, two things that are closely, if not indeed inseparably, connected in life as it ought to be. In harmony with these fundamental conceptions of

⁶See *Deuteronomy* 6:4-5; *Matthew* 22:36-40; *Mark* 12:28-31; and *Luke* 10:27. Cf. also *Romans* 13:9; *Galatians* 5:14; and *James* 2:8.

the outgoing spirit-life, Christ completed His definition of the Way of Life, and the relations of the saved life to Himself.

2. Worship and Work Required of Men

Such a life must respond in proper worship to God, and in faithful service to Men. This last, as Christ thought of service, finds its highest expression in helping men to find the

Way of Life. That is, all service to men, as Christ thought of service, should point men to Christ their Savior.

1. *The Response of a Saved Life in the Proper Worship of God.* "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God; Him shalt thou serve.

. . . . He is thy Praise, and He is thy God."

Lessons in True Worship of God John 4:1-26

"Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve (worship) Him."⁷ So said the ancient Law-Giver of Israel; and Christ began His

analysis of the responsive side of the saved life by showing how that life should properly worship God. The Lord's lessons on this aspect of salvation were given in the first part of His discourse with the Woman of Sychar, in Samaria.⁸

Jesus was journeying toward Galilee, having withdrawn from Judea after the recent imprisonment of John the Baptist. The

1. Occasion of the Lord's Lessons on True Worship John 4:1-19

Lord's route of travel led Him through the country of Samaria. While passing through that country, He came at length to Jacob's Well. There He met the woman who had come to draw water; and He entered into

conversation with her. The familiar story needs not to be retold. The inner meaning of that story, however, is worthy of careful attention. That meaning may best be attained by following the Lord's own line of approach to the inner spirit of the woman: for it was to her awakened spirit that He finally addressed His great words on the subject of worship.

Jesus undertook to reveal Himself to this woman in terms of her own interests. First, He spoke of Himself in terms of water:

Searching for Contact With This Woman's Spirit

since she had come to the well to draw water. Christ offered her a Living Water. But that offer made no impression upon her spiritual nature. It stirred no spiritual thought within

her soul. She did not know what He was talking about. Her soul was still dormant. She made no signs of spiritual response.

Next, Jesus appealed to her understanding through the medium of her conscience. He had divine knowledge of her personal

⁷See Deuteronomy 6:13, and 10:20-21.

⁸See Matthew 4:12; and Mark 1:14.

and private life; and He used the subject of her husbands to stir her conscience. His knowledge in these matters surprised her, and challenged her attention. The Lord's effort was a partial success. She recognized Him as a prophet, or teacher. She began to give Him a hearing. Her awakened conscience suggested a question about worship. This question opened the way for Christ to lead her nearer to Himself by His answering her question about the true nature of worship.

It was natural that her awakened soul should think of worship. "Our fathers," she said, "worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where

2. Truth of Worship
John 4:20-25

men ought to worship." That was her question. She may have stated it in terms of quarrelsome debate: perhaps she knew no

other terms. But her soul was awakened; and her thought turned to the question of worship. Her question was entirely logical, and entirely sincere. She had a direct and complete answer from the Master, Who gave her the real truth about the nature of true worship.

Considering her question from the historical point of view, Jesus affirmed that the Jewish side of the old controversy was correct. The Jews, as a people, had worshipped intelligently. Jehovah had dwelt in their midst, at Jerusalem. "Salvation was from the Jews." Through them God had

**(1) Traditions of
Worship, Old and
New**

spoken His oracles of truth to all the world. That was true historically: for that Old Order of, and through, the Jews was of God.

But Jesus wanted to lead this woman of Samaria out of the Old Order, within which her mind was still hovering. Therefore He held up before her the New and Higher Order of Christian worship. "But the hour cometh," He said, "and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for such doth the Father seek to be His worshippers. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." The old contention had disappeared. "Neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father." The Old Order, with its tendency to localize true religion, was gone. The New Christian Order had come; and with it had come a new emphasis in the soul's direct responses toward God.

Christ, in His words to this woman of Samaria, said three things about the kind of worship that the soul may render acceptably to God. First, the place of worship is everywhere. The

praise of God is not localized necessarily. Sincere devotions may rise acceptably anywhere from the heart of man. Worship has

(2) **Three Truths About Worship** its many aspects, some of which require their time and place; because they are social, involving many people, and require organization. But worship, in its essential nature, as a direct response of the saved life toward God, is universal. That was the Lord's first truth on this occasion.

Second, He announced that the true nature of acceptable worship was that only which was "in spirit and truth." Worship is a spiritual activity: and it must be done in the sincerity and integrity of the soul. As a third truth, Jesus declared that the Object of all worship is God, Who *is Spirit*; and that, therefore, nothing less than an exercise of the spirit and of truth can exalt God's praises. These, then, are the characteristics of true worship. The outgoings of the saved life directly toward God are universal, and they must be sincere and spiritual. And withal, the Lord gave the suggestion that men *must worship* God, and worship Him *aright*.

The woman of Samaria was interested in this definition which the Lord had given. In it she had learned a great truth, and had discovered a new hope for the despised Samaritan. She had come under the influence of the gracious Personality of the Son of God. She had heard from Him of a larger spirituality that was then dawning upon the world. The Master Teacher had at last lifted her thought up to Himself, and had opened the way for an appeal of faith.

By this time the woman's mind had turned to the thought of the Promised Messiah. Jesus then revealed Himself to her as the fulfillment of that Promise. Without hesitation, as it seems, she accepted the Son of God as her personal Savior. Upward thus, from indifference, and ignorance, and worse perhaps, Jesus led this woman of Samaria to find life through faith in Himself. And as an essential part of her upward accepting thought, Jesus gave her a true understanding of the manner in which a saved soul should respond in sincere and spiritual worship to God. The Lord Jesus gave here possibly the world's greatest lessons in what a saved life should be, on its responsive side, in the direct outgoing of the soul toward God.

2. *The Response of a Saved Life through the Channels of Service.* The effect upon this woman of the Lord's message, and

of her own faith, was immediate. No sooner had she felt the power of saving grace in her own life, than she felt also the obligation and the impulse to serve. Horizontally, therefore, her new spirit-life began to flow out in service to the world around her. In the analysis of what immediately followed, there appeared two sets of facts, each typical of universal truth.

"The Gospel of Christ . . . Is the Power of God unto Salvation."

Romans 1:16

John 4:27-42

Two things were done at this time. First, the woman went into the city near by, and testified, in the best terms she knew, to her friends concerning the Christ. "Come," she said to them, "and see a Man Who told me all things that ever I did: can this be the Christ?" That was all she knew;

1. Two Things

Done

John 4:27-38

but she used that limited knowledge to good effect. She went at once and bore a definite testimony to the Savior, which brought her friends immediately to an interest in Him.

Meantime, the other thing was done by Christ Himself. Moved in His spirit by what was happening, the Lord defined His own mission as that of *One sent to save*; and He discussed at length with His disciples the subject of Sowing and Reaping. While the woman was working, the Lord Jesus was discussing the very thing that she was doing. She was telling of Christ, and bringing others to Him as the Savior. That was an expression of the highest form of service. In her responses, therefore, the circle of the saved life, even as it was then being discussed by the Lord Himself, was seen to be complete. The grace of life, in her case, had at once issued in the grace of service, and that at its very best.

There were also two sources of spiritual results that came into evidence on this occasion, which are also of universal significance.

2. Two Sources of Spiritual Results

John 4:39-42

First, the woman's own testimony was effective. Her message carried conviction to many of her friends. "And from that city many of the Samaritans believed on Him because of the word of the woman, who testified, 'He told me all things that ever I did.' So when the Samaritans came unto Him, they besought Him to abide with them: and He abode there two days." Thus the woman's own personal testimony was the first source of spiritual results. Many believed because of what she said.

But there was a second effective source of results. This woman brought many others of her friends into an effective touch with

Christ Himself, and within reach of His power to save. The result was an extension of faith in that city. The record says that "many more believed because of His word; and they said to the woman, 'Now we believe, not because of thy speaking: for we have heard for ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Savior of the world.'" Thus indirectly, and at second-hand, this woman's services became an effective source of spiritual results.

From these facts, as analyzed above, there appear two truths of permanent value on the expressive side of the saved life. The

3. Two Truths of Permanent and Universal Value

very business of salvation is Christian service; and the business of service is to help save, in the fullest sense, those for whom God, in His mercy, has provided salvation.

All service that is Christian must recommend Christ to those who are in need of His grace. Even the cup of cold water, if given as an act of effective service, must be given *in His Name*. There is a great deal of loose thinking at this point. But the truth itself is very clear. Christian service must bring the people and the Savior effectually together.

There are two ways in which this may be done. The one way is to go out into the world, and, by life, testimony, example, teaching, and other methods, *bring Christ to the People*. This means persistent missionary work, organized and individual, at home and abroad, everywhere and every day. It means a consecrated personal influence that will always commend Jesus Christ out of one's own life. It means the willingness to spend and to be spent in the Master's service. It means the recognition and the acceptance of the responsibility of living the Gospel so that Christ may be glorified in the lives of others.

The other way of accomplishing this result, is to go out into the world, and, by personal invitation and influence, *bring the unsaved into direct contact with Jesus Christ*, so that He may save them. This method of meeting the responsibilities of a saved life means to bring the unsaved to the Church of God, where Christ may speak to them through the messages of His own Gospel ministers. It means to bring them to the Bible Schools of the churches, where Christ may speak to them in an intimate way out of His own Word. It means to bring them to the quiet services of prayer, where the Spirit of God holds communion with the souls of men. It means to bring the unsaved to any place, or under the influence of any circumstances, where the channels of saving grace may be opened between the Lord Jesus Christ and their own unsaved souls.

Thus the Son of God completed His definition of salvation. The saved life, as set forth by Him, begins with the reception of divine grace, offered through Christ Himself as the Son of God sent to save the lost, and received by the individual in a definite acceptance of Christ as a personal Savior. The saved life finds completeness, according to Christ's definition, in a sincere and spiritual worship of God, and in a service to men that will help them to find and to enjoy the same salvation.

That was Christ's definition of a saved life. The saved life, as He saw it, must manifest a supreme love and service, which looks up to glorify God, and reaches out to help bless Mankind. Frequently, in His later ministry, the Lord Jesus made the responsive activity of a soul the test of its receiving integrity; but never, in all of His ministry, did He depart from the exalted conception of the saved life that was set forth in the incidents surveyed in this chapter. Having completed this definition, the Lord Jesus was ready to begin the more active phases of His Mission, and public ministry, as the Savior of the world.

CHAPTER V

THE FIRST TYPICAL RE-ACTIONS TO THE SON OF GOD

"Behold, a Sower went forth to sow; and when He sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; . . . some fell upon stony places; . . . and some fell among thorns; . . . but other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit." *Matthew 13:3-8.*

"For what if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid." *Romans 3:3-4.*

"They which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham." *Galatians 3:7.*

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." *Romans 8:14.*

The historical materials studied in Chapter IV constitute that part of the Lord's Life-Work which is commonly called "The Early Judean Ministry." The events of this chapter make up the First Period of His Public Ministry in Galilee. This "First Galilean Period" extended from His return to Galilee until He began to organize His Kingdom by choosing the Twelve Apostles. This was a period of active and aggressive work among the people, a time when the Lord Jesus inaugurated a vigorous campaign of preaching, and teaching, and healing.

The Nature and Significance of Christ's Work in This Period.

The work of this period accomplished two positive results. It applied to the people the saving grace of Christ their Savior, which He had previously defined. It also gathered a strong following unto Himself from among the common people, which became a powerful background for the Lord's later constructive work. The common people heard Him gladly. But the work of this period did a third thing. It revealed the presence even then of those who were destined to become more and more definite and determined in their opposition to the Lord's work.

The Son of God had already presented Himself to the world, so that the people might recognize His Divine Nature. He had already told the world how to be saved, so that men might believe in Him for salvation. Christ was therefore fully ready to enter upon the aggressive work which is now to be studied. Passing northward from the Samaritan scenes considered in the last chapter, Jesus came into the regions of Galilee, where the Jews were

1. Work in Galilee
Matthew 4:12-17,
and 14:3-5
Mark 1:14-15,
and 6:17-18
Luke 3:19-20

less prejudiced than were those who lived in Judea and in Jerusalem.

In that Northern Province of Galilee, according to the prophetic appointment quoted by Matthew, Jesus was to conduct His first vigorous popular campaign. In that Province, where there was less prejudice, He could more easily reach the heart of the common people, and also of the higher classes. Therefore, "returning in the power of the Spirit" for this work, "Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe in the Gospel.'" The same fact of this new emphasis in the Lord's work was otherwise stated in these words: "From that time began Jesus to preach, and to say, 'Repent ye; for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.'"

That early ministry in Galilee was one of great popularity. It rapidly developed a general feeling of wonder, which served as a

2. Background of Wonder

Luke 4:14-15

John 4:43-45

background for the particularized events which will be considered in this chapter. Before Christ's coming into Galilee, the report of His ministry in Judea had already reached that Northern Province. Expectation was already running high when the Lord entered that country. He had hardly begun to teach in their synagogues, when His fame went throughout all the land. Curiosity caught the crowd. Some sought the Lord with sincere and devout intentions from the first. But many motives brought the multitudes together. They came from every place. They wanted to see Jesus. They wanted to hear Him speak. They wanted to receive help from Him. Repeatedly, persistently, enthusiastically, they came, as individuals and in multitudes, to partake of the Lord's gracious ministry.

The Lord Jesus gave them hearing, and ministered to their many needs. He taught them with Divine Authority. He persuaded them with Divine Love. He healed them with Divine Power. It was the Son of God Who was ministering among the people. His ministry, in word and in deed, was inevitably a source of astonishment to the people. Never before had they seen any person like Jesus. Never before had they heard words so gracious as were those which He spake. His fame was boundless. His audiences grew day by day. His praise was the theme of every tongue. His ministry in Galilee produced a nation-wide background of wonder, and astonishment, and amazement, as He went about doing good among the people, and teaching them the Way of Life.

This background of wonder and astonishment is frequently emphasized in the Gospel records of this period. Upon this back-

3. Typical Nature of the Recorded Events in This Period

ground, the particular events of this period are spread out, like items in the foreground of a picture. The matter may be stated this way. The fully recorded events of this period seem to rise out of the general background, and were representative of what was happening everywhere every day. That is, the concrete events of this period are typical in character: they are typical of the re-actions of the people in general to the ministry of Christ the Savior.

There were two kinds of these re-actions to Jesus, the favorable, and the opposing. Most of the people heard Him with joy and glad responsiveness. Their manner of expressing their favor varied widely; but in general the attitude of the multitudes was, as a rule, friendly and favorable. Many of them believed, with the full acceptance of

Two Kinds of Response to Christ: Favor, and Opposition

faith, in the Son of God. In general, there was great rejoicing because of Jesus and His ministry to the people.

But all was not joy. The notes of discord could easily be heard. The unharmonious sounds of unsympathetic voices constantly marred the general chorus of praise. The presence of those who opposed the Lord was definitely recognized in the records of this period. They were, as Jude suggested later, like spots in the feasts of charity.

The outstanding concrete events of this period were presented in two well-marked groups, or series, which, as it appears, were consciously set in contrast the one with the other. The first series, as will appear in the following study, has recorded events that are expressive of typical attitudes that were mainly favorable to Jesus. The second series sets forth the gradually rising opposition to the Son of God. The analysis of these two series of events, with their deep-laid contrasts, will now be undertaken.

I. The Typical Re-Actions Mainly Favorable to Christ

From the first, and with repeated emphasis, the Records of this period have laid out the background of wonder and astonish-

"The People Who Sat in Darkness Saw a Great Light"

ment which was produced by the Divine Personality and the doings of the Son of God. Then upon that background, kept thus constantly in mind, the Records have told of several particular instances of re-action to the ministry of Jesus

Christ. Most of those responses were favorable to Him, and, on the whole, probably not unlike the many other favorable responses that helped to make up the common background of growing popularity.

The particular incidents that have been recorded, obviously, were chosen for special narration because of their two-fold representative character. First, they were told to show how men were responding to the ministry of Jesus at that time. Furthermore, the records of those responses have portrayed individuals who were definitely typical. The typical re-actions to Christ thus set forth are permanently true in the spiritual history of all the world.

1. The Urgent Appeal of the Open-Minded Noblemen. First there came into the foreground of this picture of the Savior's popular ministry the open-minded Nobleman, who was at that time in great distress. His name is not known. He was designated merely as "a certain Nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum." This man, "when he heard that Jesus was come out of Judea into Galilee, . . . went unto Him, and besought Him that He would come down, and heal his son; for he was at the point of death." Such were the circumstances under which this open-minded man came to Jesus.

This man was willing to be helped. He had faith enough to place himself in the way to be helped. Jesus, desiring to make the man definitely conscious of his own faith, challenged him, saying, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will in no wise believe." But the man's faith was real; and his case was urgent. He needed not to wait for signs and wonders. He only asked for one clear fact of help in his distress. His appeal was, "Sir, come down ere my child die!" He believed that Jesus could give help even in that supreme moment; and that confidence, if realized, would be sufficient argument for full conviction.

The Lord Jesus, when He saw this man's urgent faith, spoke the word of health for the son that was sick. "Go thy way," Jesus said to the anxious father; "thy son liveth." The Nobleman, who had believed the words of assurance from Christ, returned to his home, and found the child healed, even as the Lord had said. The direct and inevitable result was that which universally arises from the definite contact of open-minded

**Faith's Cry to the
Christ for Help
John 4:46-54**

**1. Faith That Makes
Divine Help
Available**

**2. Christ's Mercy
That Never Fails**

people with the Lord Jesus. It is said, of this Nobleman, that "himself believed, and his whole house."

2. *The Skeptical Neighbors at Nazareth.* The next typical situation involved a mixture of skepticism and favorable response.

It was the occasion of the Lord's preaching in His home church, or synagogue, in the City of Nazareth, to which He had come in the course of His Galilean Ministry. When He had appeared in the church, apparently expecting to take a leading part in the services, the attendant in the synagogue gave to Jesus the *Prophecy of Isaiah* from which to read His Scripture lesson. Turning to the Sixty-first Chapter of that Prophecy, the Lord Jesus read a graphic description of His own Commission to serve and to save. After handing the book again to the attendant, Jesus began to comment on the Scripture which He had read. "To-day," He said, "hath this Scripture been fulfilled in your ears." Continuing, He explained His own Commission as the Promised Messiah, and the Savior of the world.

The responses of the people varied. The total effect, however, was a historical support of confidence in the Commission of Jesus as the Christ. During the first part of His

1. **Christ's Message of Grace and Life** discourse, the audience gave great heed to His words. They "all bare Him witness, and wondered at the words of grace which proceeded out of His mouth." Then there arose a re-action of skepticism, mingled with envy; of contempt, born of personal familiarity. His neighbors, at least many of them, knew Him not at all; yet they doubted Him, and scorned Him, because they thought they knew Him too well to give Him rightful recognition. They seem to have demanded some sign, or miracle, to prove that He was really the Christ.

But the Lord Jesus, perceiving their state of mind, took the situation into His own hands. He denied them the sign which they desired; because He refused to abase His Divine Power merely to satisfy the curious. He then showed His hearers that they were in line with the spiritually blind in

2. **Independence of God's Plan of Salvation** all ages, who have always refused to recognize a commissioner from Heaven when he has happened to be raised up in their own midst. But such refusal, as Christ showed by reference to historical facts that should have been well known in Nazareth, cannot ultimately hinder the plans of God. So it was with the Lord

Jesus at this time. He desired to save, and to bless His neighbors and friends in Nazareth; but their blind refusal to believe in Him was of no special importance in its bearing upon His own nature and destiny as the Son of God. This He seems to have made very definite in His talk on this occasion.

They understood the drift of His meaning, and were cut to the heart by the message which He delivered. Doubtless some,

3. Results:

Violence; and

Capernaum Became

Christ's Working

Center

perhaps many, responded favorably to the Lord's message. But the thought of the leaders took an adverse turn. They were filled with wrath, and thrust Jesus forth from their synagogue, and out of their city. They led Him forth to the brow of the hill on

which the city was built, intending to throw Him headlong over the precipice. But their violence was averted, probably by an exercise of the Lord's sovereign power, which they had tried to deny. It is said, that the Lord "passing through the midst of them went His way."

The visible results of this episode were unimportant, with one possible exception. A sequent of this event, and possibly a result of it, was this. The Lord Jesus at this time changed His residence from Nazareth to Capernaum, which henceforth became His working center in Galilee. It may be that this incident cost Nazareth the loss of her second immortal distinction. However, it should be remembered that the removal of the Lord to Capernaum was itself a part of God's ancient plan for the ministry of His Son.

3. *The Faith of Four Prepared Men.* The Lord Jesus, passing on through Galilee in His ministry of grace and power, came at length upon four men by the Sea of Galilee.

**"Righteousness
Shall Go Before
Him"**

Psalm 85:13

Matthew 4:18-22

Mark 1:16-20

Luke 5:1-11

These four were the two sets of brothers, Simon and Andrew, James and John, who were fishermen together on the Sea. They were well prepared to recognize Jesus as the Christ, and to follow Him as the Lord and Savior. Already they had given heed to the searching messages of John the Baptist, and

had repented of their sins, in preparation for the Coming of the Christ. Already, some of them at least had come into touch with the Lord Himself, as stated previously in Chapter III. Already their hearts had been so purified, and so spiritualized, that they could readily see God as revealed in His Son Jesus Christ.

Therefore, when Jesus came to these men, and called them to follow Him, they responded immediately. They were brought face to face with His Divine Power in the miraculous draught of fishes. The first effect upon these men was a sense of awe in the presence of the Son of God. "Simon Peter, when he saw it, fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, 'Depart from me: for I am a sinful man, O Lord!'" Thus their morally sensitive souls shrank before the majesty of the Divine Christ. Yet that shrinking was only one step in their coming nearer to Him. The Lord gave them re-assurance against their fears, and called them to have a part in the Ministry of His work of salvation. They therefore, in the hopeful privileges of His service, immediately left all, and followed Him. Their response is typical of all those in all ages who have made diligent use of the means whereby preparation may be made for recognizing and accepting Jesus Christ.

4. *The Recognition of Christ by the Evil Spirit.* The Lord Jesus was recognized next, and His Divine Nature was fully acknowledged, by an Evil Spirit. This re-action was representative of what always happened during the ministry of Christ. Whatever men may say, or think, about the Lord Jesus Christ, the devils were always of one mind. They always recognized Jesus Christ as the Son of God. That was the acknowledgment which the evil spirit made on this occasion.

The incident happened in Capernaum on a Sabbath Day, a great day of ministry in that city. The Lord Jesus, at the time, was in the synagogue, teaching with such power and authority as to astonish all the people. "Suddenly there was in the synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, saying, 'What have we to do with Thee, Thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art Thou come to destroy us? I know Thee Who Thou art, the Holy One of God.'" And Jesus rebuked him, saying, 'Hold thy peace, and come out of him.' And the unclean spirit, tearing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, 'What is this? A new teaching! With authority He commandeth even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him!' And the report of Him went out straightway everywhere into all the region of Galilee round about."

Call of Four Disciples

"The Devils Also Believe and Tremble"

James 2:19

Matthew 8:14-17

Mark 1:21-34

Luke 4:31-41

1. Christ vs. the Evil Spirit

That was a great day in Capernaum. The two outstanding features of the Lord's ministry that day were His treatment of evil spirits, and His healing of diseases. Perhaps the two things were brought close together for a purpose: for there is a close connection between sin and human suffering. The diseases healed on that day were many and varied. The devils encountered by Christ, with complete agreement in thought, and with full submission to His Divine Will, acknowledged Him to be the Son of God.

Standing in the foreground of the general account of this busy day, are two concrete instances of the Lord's beneficent ministry. The first was the casting out of the unclean spirit, already described. The second was the healing of Peter's mother-in-law, who lay sick of a fever. Both of these instances were evidently given as representative of the general ministry of the day. They were also typical in another sense. The man with the unclean spirit was helpless, when he came to Jesus. The group in the home of Peter were the Lord's familiar friends. To both alike the Lord rendered an immediate ministry, without imposing preliminary conditions. The two situations, though widely different in themselves, both represent what happens when men present to the Savior an immediately open door for the exercise of His saving ministry.

5. *The Cry of the Confident Leper.* While Jesus continued His ministry in Galilee, the popular attitude toward Him developed into one of confident expectation. This feeling was fully exemplified in the attitude of the Leper who came to Christ to be healed. The day on which this man was healed was a very busy day; and the incident rises concretely, in the records, out of a general background of similar ministry, which occurred on one of the Lord's most popular preaching tours in Galilee.

"He Had Faith To Be Healed"
 Matthew 4:23,
 and 8:1-4
 Mark 1:35-45
 Luke 4:42-44,
 and 5:12-16

The pressure of the Lord's work that day was very great; but it was probably only typical of what was happening every day.

The people were thronging Him from every place. They were bringing "all manner of disease and all manner of sickness" to Him for treatment. They were, even in the early morning, invading His secret desert place of prayer. They were trying, in every community where He ministered, to induce Him

1. Typical Pressure of the Lord's Work

to remain permanently in their midst. They were crowding upon Him in such numbers that it was becoming difficult for Him to carry out His own mission, which was to go from town to town, and preach the Gospel of the Kingdom to all of the people.

Typical also was the faith of this Leper, who came to Jesus, in the midst of those crowded conditions. In his affliction, this man fell on his face before the Son of God.

2. Typical Faith of the People

There is no doubt but that this stricken man, in his appeal for help, expressed the common feeling of that throng who had seen so many wonderful works at the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ. This Leper said, "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean." There was no longer any question as to the Lordship of Jesus. There was no longer any doubt of His Divine Power. "Lord, if Thou wilt, . . . Thou canst!" This direct confidence called forth a direct answer from the Lord Jesus. Stretching forth His hand and touching the man, Jesus said, "I will; be thou made clean." The Leper was healed by this word of Divine Power.

Then followed a typical instance of the publicity that was being given at that time to the Lord's ministry, and of how Christ tried to defend Himself against the throng that

3. Typical Publicity of the Lord's Work

was increasing each day. He commanded this healed man to comply with the requirements of the law respecting cured lepers. This command the man may have obeyed. Jesus also commanded him carefully to keep the matter of his being healed a secret. This the man did not do. Instead of doing as the Lord had commanded, the healed man "went out, and began to publish it much, and to spread abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into a city, but was without in desert places: and they came to Him from every quarter."

Thus the people's feeling toward Jesus was that of confident expectation. With the above description of a popular enthusiasm that was already becoming burdensome, and was still growing, the series of more favorable responses to the Lord, and to His work in this period, was brought to a close. But the Lord's successes had already provoked the activity of His enemies. Therefore the remaining records of this period are occupied with the scenes of opposition to the Son of God. These scenes, both in principle and in method, were typical of all the opposition to Christ, which finally resulted in His death on the Cross. These scenes of opposition must have been set, with definite intention, in direct contrast with the series of favorable re-actions which has

already been described. To these scenes of opposition, which are less pleasing but highly instructive, it is now necessary to give careful attention.

II. The Rise of Opposition Against the Son of God

The majority of the people heard the Lord Jesus gladly. But the emphasis which He laid upon a deeper spirituality rapidly caused an uneasy feeling in the hearts of the leading classes of the Jews. Those ruling classes, who led the opposition against the Lord, were the chief priests and Levites, the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

The Underlying Causes of This Opposition. Why did those particular classes among the Jews oppose the Lord Jesus Christ? They were, as Paul has said, "Israelites: to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises."¹ Historically, that was very true; and yet there were four reasons that led those classes, in the day of Christ, to oppose Him and His work.

The first cause of their opposition was hid away in the mysterious purposes of Divine Providence: not, however, that God ever caused the Jews to sin. Far be that suggestion from the thought of this discussion. Their sin was their own doing, and their own undoing also. Yet it was true, even as Paul has so carefully stated, "that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." The Jewish rulers, who had sinned themselves and led their nation into sin, had fallen judicially into the hands of God, Who was yet able to accomplish His larger purposes of saving the world, and also His own chosen People Israel in the fullness of His own time and manner.

In part that was the cause. But there were other causes of this opposition: deep and sinful causes, whose guilt the Lord Himself laid unsparingly at the door of the rich and ruling classes of Israel,—the chief priests, Levites, Pharisees, and Sadducees. In them the Nation had sinned: for they had become "vessels of wrath fitted to destruction." Sin had so blinded their eyes, and so polluted their hearts, that they could not see God in the Person of His Son then in their midst.² They had heeded not

¹See *Romans* 9:4, and 11:25. However, one should at this time read all of *Romans*, chapters 9, 10, and 11.

²See Chapter XI, note 2.

the Prophets, nor repented at the call of John the Baptist. They obeyed not the Gospel of Christ, nor heard the call of God in that Gospel. They were "a disobedient and gainsaying people," living far off from God, and unresponsive to the voice of His Spirit. The fruits of this evil in their hearts found two forms of expression, which may, for the sake of clearness and emphasis, be elevated in this outline, and co-ordinated with the moving causes of this opposition.

The first of those expressions of evil was the blind religious zeal of the rulers of Israel. Paul, who understood them, being himself then one of them, has said, "I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge." They thought that they knew; and yet they lived

3. Blind Religious Zeal of the Rulers of Israel

too far from God to know that they did not know. Though they were completely void of all that was vital and spiritual in life; yet they, with a sort of blinded sincerity, supposed themselves to be the faithful people of God. They had not the spiritual discernment to recognize the Divinity of God's own Son; yet they were very sensitive and jealous respecting the character of God, as they thought, and zealous always to defend His Name against anything which they thought to be a sin of blasphemy. They were blind to, and ignorant of, divine things. They had the form of truth and life, but had not the vital spirit of either. Therefore their capacity for inconsistency was very great; and that fact wrought havoc with them at every turn they made in spiritual matters.

Those conditions belonged to the deepest religious natures of the Jewish rulers. More immediately, however, they were selfish. That was the second manner in which their evil hearts expressed themselves. In no other respect were they more self-deceived than in this: they supposed themselves to be

4. Selfish Fears of the Jewish Ruling Classes

religious, when they were in fact essentially selfish. It is perfectly obvious, that their religious zeal was oftentimes not religious at all. They were only using the forms and the machinery of religion to defend themselves against selfish fears of a political, social, and economic character.

That was true of their present interest in Galilee. The scribes, and other representatives of the old Jewish Order, had taken special pains to hear the teachings of Jesus, possibly having been delegated from Jerusalem to Galilee for that purpose. Those official classes were personally interested in the religious order as

it then existed: for they held office under that system. They were conservatives: for it paid them to be conservative. They were exceedingly sensitive to any disturbances of the snug religious adjustments by which profits came to themselves.

Very soon therefore they saw that they could have nothing in common with the teachings of the Lord Jesus. They saw even more: for selfishness is exceedingly keen in its perceptions. They foresaw the Kingdom of Christ, and knew that His spiritual Kingdom, if fulfilled in its logical intentions, would supplant the whole Jewish system as it was then constituted. They knew that such a result would be the undoing of all their own interests, both personal and official, in the system that was then serving them with so much advantage.

For these reasons, and possibly others, the re-actions of the Jewish ruling classes to the work of Jesus was filled with the violence of deep-felt personal antagonism. It sprang from that feeling, no less than from a misguided religious zeal. In fact, their opposition to Christ, and to His work, arose mainly from a mixture of mistaken religious zeal, blind selfishness, and mad personal resistance. This opposition felt its way gradually, and with caution, at first; but later it rose rapidly into a definite and determined form, which hastened onward toward the Cross. The first cautious stages of that movement fall within the period under consideration in the present chapter.

1. The First Stage: the Secret Thought of Blasphemy. The first expression of the rising opposition against Jesus was the thought of blasphemy which was entertained by His enemies, when He healed the Paralytic who was let down through the roof into the Lord's presence. This story of healing gives another charming instance of the eagerness and the faith with which the people sought the helpful ministry of Jesus. But the story was recorded, not so much to show the people's approach to Christ, as to give the occasion and the setting of this first clash between the Lord and His enemies.

The form of this first attack against the Lord was significant. Jesus had said to the palsied man, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven." The scribes and the Pharisees, who were watching for an opportunity to oppose Jesus, heard His words to the palsied man. "Reasoning in their hearts," those enemies of the Lord "said within themselves" (or, possibly,

Healing the
Paralytic Borne of
Four
Matthew 9:1-8
Mark 2:1-12
Luke 5:17-26

1. Significant Form
of This First
Attack upon Jesus

whispered quietly among themselves), "why doth this Man thus speak? He blasphemeth: who can forgive sins but One, even God?" This first charge against Jesus therefore took the form of secret thoughts of blasphemy. His enemies had not yet the boldness to come out into the open, and make a direct public accusation against the Son of God.

This accusing thought was a charge of blasphemy. That fact was very important. The truth or falsity of the accusation turned

2. Significance of This Charge of Blasphemy

squarely upon the question of the Divine Nature of Jesus Christ. His enemies were correct when they asserted that no one can forgive sins but God alone. Could Jesus forgive sins? That authority in Him depended upon His being Divine. Jesus was Divine, and could forgive sins; or else He was an imposter, and guilty of blasphemy against God. That was the exact question at issue. Having rejected His Divine Nature, the enemies of Christ could conceive of His words only as blasphemy. They struck their first blow directly at the Lord's Divinity.

The reply of Jesus was therefore a direct defense of His own Divine Nature. They had accused Him as a man. He answered

3. Christ's Reply, Defending His Own Divine Nature

them *as a God*. First, He read their secret thoughts, in order to make His reply. That act of divine insight should have convinced them. Next, He stated the question at issue very plainly. He asked, "Whether is easier, to say, 'Thy sins are forgiven'; or to say, 'Arise, and walk'?" If Christ was Divine, then there would be no difference. His power would then be equal in the spiritual and in the physical realms of life.

Finally, the Lord Jesus gave a visible proof of His Divine Power over both realms. He calmly set His Divine Authority to forgive sins over against His Divine Power to heal; and then He performed the miracle of healing. The situation was one in which no imposter could have succeeded. There could be no denying the force of that tangible argument: for when the Lord commanded, the sick man arose, and walked away, carrying his bed. That was the voice of Divine Authority: the Authority of One Who has a right to forgive sins.

The effects of that miracle have been told with solemn emphasis. The situation was intensely dramatic. The common

4. Effects of the Healing Miracle

people had seen the clash between Jesus and His enemies, whose secret thoughts He had brought to light. The people had understood the point at issue. They had watched while the Son of God had

put His very Nature to the test. They had followed His proof, step by step, to the final word upon which all else depended. The supreme moment had come. Solemn attention held the crowd. The word of Divine command was given. The sick man stood up, and walked away!

The immediate effect was terrifying. Matthew said of this effect, that "when the multitudes saw it, they were afraid, and glorified God, Who had given such power unto men." Mark stated "that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, 'We never saw it on this fashion!'" Luke declared that "amazement took hold on all, and they glorified God; and they were filled with fear, saying, 'We have seen strange things to-day!'" What the effect was upon the accusers of Christ, has not been recorded. If they skulked away in confusion, it was only for a little while: for they soon renewed their attack, more openly than before, upon the Son of God.

2. *The Second Stage: the Complaint to the Disciples of Jesus about His Eating with Publicans and Sinners.* The second attack

**Call of Matthew,
the Publican**
Matthew 9:9-13
Mark 2:13-17
Luke 5:27-32

upon Jesus was made in the home of Matthew, the Publican, who had given a supper in honor of his newly accepted Lord and Master.³ "And it came to pass, as He sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with

Jesus and His Disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto His Disciples, 'Why eateth your Master with the publicans and sinners?'" There again, as in the first attack, the Lord's enemies, who probably had gone to spy in upon this occasion, had not the courage to go directly to Him, but made their accusations indirectly, through a complaining question addressed to His Disciples.

That complaining question, though quite superficial in its nature, was cunningly devised. Its implications were intended to cut two ways. In one direction, the question assailed

1. Double Direction of This Complaint the Divinity of Christ. The complainers held that Jesus, if He had possessed Divine insight, would have known the moral unfitness of those present, and therefore would have separated Himself from their company. In the other direction, this question assailed the Human Nature of Jesus. His questioners intended against the

³Matthew's other name was Levi. He was a Roman tax-gatherer. Apparently he had just been called into the Master's service when he made this supper for His Lord. For additional facts about Matthew, see Chapter VI, page 136.

Man Jesus a charge of social and moral contamination through His association with the publicans and sinners, as He was doing on this occasion.

Jesus heard that complaining question, and made an answer that was complete in each of its two parts. He first justified His

own association with the publicans and sinners with whom He then sat at the supper. In a manner worthy of His Divine Nature, He ignored the suggestion of social contamination, and lifted His reply to the higher level of His own Divine Commission as Savior of the world. In a few words, He told His accusers that the carrying out of His own Commission as Savior called Him into the midst of those who were in need of salvation. "They that are whole," He said, "have no need of a physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." In those brief words, which were sympathetic with those at the table, the Lord Jesus fully justified His presence in that company.

But He stopped not with those words. Had He done so, He would have left His accusers, who considered themselves to be both *well* and *righteous*, feeling that they had no need of salvation from Jesus Christ. But the Savior of men was unwilling to leave His accusers then, or any one else at any time, in that false position. They felt their own religious life to be of a very superior type, and quite sufficient in itself. But the Son of God thought otherwise.

He also carried His thought into action. Turning the X-Ray of His own Divine insight, which they had questioned, upon the hearts of His enemies, He revealed to them the deepest needs of their own barren lives. "But go ye," He said to them, "and learn what this meaneth, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.'" Thus the Lord told His enemies that they, who stood apart in their self-assumed religious superiority, had yet to be touched by the basic principles of true spiritual religion. Thus He told them that they, who were most careful in ceremonial performances, had yet to learn that pure religion is a ministry of mercy to those who are in need.⁴ Thus He warned them to make a solemn self-examination, lest they be found wanting in those things which God requires first of all in those who would measure up to His Divine requirements.

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⁴Compare *James* 1:27, and *Matthew* 23:23-28.

The results of this encounter have not been recorded. Jesus Himself may have kept this incident in His mind. The central part of it seems to have echoed from His thought in the Parable of the Good Samaritan. Jesus drew then, for an opposing Pharisee, this same picture of the Pharisaic heart as not understanding religion to be essentially a ministry of mercy. Nothing has been suggested as to the general effect of this incident upon the company who sat at the supper. But the Pharisees, from Christ's comparison of mercy and sacrifice, may have gotten a suggestion for their next attack upon Him: for that attack was concerned with a question of observing religious ceremonies.

3. *The Third Stage: a Direct Question Addressed to Jesus.*
The third movement of Christ's enemies at this time was a direct approach to Him. However, the approach was cautiously made. It came in the milder form of a direct question, which was, at this time, addressed to Christ Himself. In thus approaching the Lord Jesus, the disciples of the Pharisees united with the disciples of John the Baptist. In form and substance, they made a common inquiry. They wanted to know why it was, that the disciples of John, and those of the Pharisees, were often fasting and making supplication, while the disciples of Jesus continued to eat, and drink, and rejoice.

The two groups asked the same question. But their motives were very different. The disciples of John were oftentimes perplexed at the attitude of Jesus, as were many others, no doubt; because they did not fully understand why He treated the old order of religious observances with such indifference. They had therefore an honest purpose in their question which they brought to Jesus. They sought the truth, in all sincerity, as it was held by Jesus, concerning the fast days, and other similar religious observances.

But the Pharisees, who doubtless had a studied design in sending their disciples along with those of John to ask this question, had a different motive and purpose in thus approaching Jesus. They evidently desired, in the very presence of His friends' friends, to discredit the religion of Jesus Himself, by thus calling particular attention to His want of harmony, in that He had failed to co-operate in religious observances which both

4. Results of This Second Attack upon Jesus Christ

"Why Do Thy Disciples Fast Not?"
Matthew 9:14-17
Mark 2:18-22
Luke 5:33-39

groups of the questioners had considered to be essential and obligatory.

The Lord Jesus, with complete mastery of the situation, and with consummate skill, replied to both groups in one answer. He used in His reply three figures,—the bridegroom rejoicing, the patching of an old garment with new cloth, and the putting of new wine into old wine-skins. These figures He used to convey the truth which He desired to give to each group of His questioners. Through all of these figures, there ran the central idea of a New Order of Religion, which He organized later as His own spiritual Kingdom in the world. That central idea of these figures was the basis of the Lord's reply on this occasion.

Through the figure of the rejoicing bridegroom, Jesus told the disciples of John, in order to allay their honest disturbances of mind about questions of fasting, that a new time of rejoicing had then opened upon the world. The very Christ of Promise was actually present among them: and their joy in Him should have place above all other considerations. They should, in fact, make full rejoicing while He was with them; for "the days will come," He said; "and when the Bridegroom shall be taken away from them, then will they fast in those days."⁵

But the disciples of the Pharisees had asked the Lord a designing question. He gave them a different answer. Through this same figure of the bridegroom, He turned back their charges upon their own heads. They had suggested that He showed an unfaithful want of co-operation in things required. He replied that their Messiah, too, was then present, in the Person of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; but that they, for lack of sympathetic spiritual insight and responsiveness, were continuing to fast, instead of rightly receiving Him with great joy. He meant that they were out of harmony with the spirit of the true religion, as it should have been manifested by them on that occasion.

Under the other two figures, Jesus emphasized for all His hearers the clear-cut exclusiveness of the New Order which He had come to establish. That must be fully recognized. First, He declared that the worn-out Jewish Order could not be patched up by putting into it portions taken from the New Spiritual Kingdom which He was setting up in the world. Further, He declared that any attempt to

⁵This is one of the Lord's very first references to His own Death. He

put the new spiritual life into the old ceremonial forms would be disastrous to the Old and the New alike. The two orders were different, and must be kept apart. The new wine must be put in new wine-skins. The Lord's meaning in these figures was quite plain. The new spiritual life which He was giving to the world, and the vital spiritual truth which He was then teaching, must have new forms of expression. The Old Order of the Jews must be discarded, if the New Order of the Christian was to be received.

For those who were sincerely attached to the Old Order, that was a hard saying. Jesus fully recognized that fact when He said, in closing this discourse, that "no man having drunk old wine desireth new: for he saith, 'The old is good.' " Christ knew full well the difficulties of breaking away from

old pious attachments. Yet He affirmed that the Old Order must be given up. Jesus was kind, but He was definite. He was sympathetic, but He was also uncompromising on this point. He drew the line of separation with a firm hand. He gave an impression of finality on this subject that was neither misunderstood nor forgotten by those who, from that day, rapidly became His determined opponents. Henceforth they knew that there could be between Him and them no agreement.

4. *The Fourth Stage: a direct Attack upon the Son of God.* The third encounter between Christ and His enemies ended, as

**"Remember the Sabbath Day, to Keep It Holy"
"The Sabbath Was Made for Man"**

stated above, in something like an ultimatum from Him. From that time His enemies seemed eager for a direct attack upon the Son of God. An excuse for such an attack they soon found, as they thought, in a series of three separate occasions on which, as they held, either Jesus Himself, or His disciples with His approval, were guilty of violating the sacred law of God respecting the Sabbath Day.

(1) *The Charge of Contradicting the Sabbath Law.* On the first of those three occasions, the Son of God was charged with contradicting the Law of the Sabbath, be-

**Healing of the Infirm Man at the Pool of Bethesda
John 5:1-47**

cause, as His enemies said, He had commanded work on the Sabbath Day. This direct charge was made when Jesus had healed the infirm man at the Pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem, where the sick man had lain for thirty-eight years,

foresaw the tragic breaking of this gathering storm; but because of other necessary work, He kept that tragic fact in the background for the present. See the opening of Chapter XIV, where this point is discussed.

at the very feet of the Jewish officials, without a hand of mercy ever being offered to help him in his need. Jesus saw the man, perhaps the quicker because of his neglect, and said to him, on the Sabbath Day, "Arise, take up thy bed, and walk." The man heeded this command, "and straightway (he) was made whole, and took up his bed and walked."

But the carrying of that bed, according to the interpretation of the enemies of Christ, was an unlawful work on the Sabbath Day.

1. Basis and Nature of This Charge against Christ
John 5:9b-18

Therefore they called the man to give an account of his conduct. When they demanded by what authority he did this, the healed man made an answer that was profoundly logical and altogether true in its deeper meaning.

He said, "He that made me whole, the same said unto me, 'Take up thy bed, and walk.'" Probably the man fully intended to say all that his words seem to say: for he knew that *One Who had power to heal, had authority also to make and to give laws*, and to know the true meaning of all Law. Such at least, as will presently appear, was the central truth involved in the charge brought against Christ on this occasion.

The hostile Jews felt the force of the healed man's argument. When they pressed him further to know who gave him that command, the man told them that it was Jesus. This statement opened the way for the Jews to persecute Jesus, because, as they said, He had thus contradicted God's law relative to the Sabbath Day. Jesus offered to justify His command by saying, "My Father worketh even until now, and I work." But this statement enraged the Jews more than ever. They therefore "sought the more to kill Him, because He not only brake the Sabbath, but also called God His Father, making Himself equal with God."

Again the question at issue turned squarely upon the Divine Nature of Jesus Christ. He had commanded the sick man to do

2. Nature and Significance of the Lord's Reply
John 5:19-47

this thing on the Sabbath Day: then He had justified this command by exalting Himself to an equality with God, and therefore to a place of equality as the Sovereign Author of the Law. The hostile Jews were quick to

see, and also quick to resent, both the Lord's command, and His sovereign argument in justification of that command. They persecuted Him for the command; but they tried to kill Him because of the justification which He offered. The reply of Jesus to this hostile treatment was a formidable defense of His own Divine

Nature, and therefore of the lawfulness of His act of Divine Authority respecting the Sabbath Day.

First, the Lord Jesus stated the truth about His own equality with the Father. Jesus affirmed that He was equal with the

(1) Christ's Declaration of His Own Nature
John 5:19-29

Father in the nature and extent of their works. He further affirmed that He was equal with the Father in the authority of judgment, the prerogative of Judging being in fact delegated to the Son by the Father, to the end that men might give to both Father and Son their full measure of equal and inseparable honor. Jesus declared Himself to be the one Divine Condition, and Source, and Judge of Life: the Condition, because He was sent of God; the Source, because He is the Son of God; and the appointed Judge, because He is the Son of Man. Christ is therefore the Lord of Life, and of Law, and of Destiny, before Whom all men, even the dead, shall appear for the final judgment.⁶

Thus the Lord Jesus laid His enemies in final prostration before His own Throne of Divine Judgment. Next He showed

(2) Christ's Citation of Evidence for Confidence in His Divinity
John 5:30-37a

that they were without excuse, by reviewing before them the *witnesses* whereon they might rest their full confidence in His Divine Nature and Authority. They had the evidence of His own self-consistent life-work in their midst. They had the testimony of John the Baptist, in whose "light" they had been willing to rejoice for a season. They had seen the convincing arguments of Christ's own works, which had furnished full proof of His own Divine origin and nature. They had heard the direct testimony of the Father in Heaven, which should have led them at once to believe in His Son.

But why had those Jews not accepted Jesus Christ as the Son of God? The spiritual reasons for their rejection, Jesus gave in

(3) Christ's Analysis of Jewish Rejection
John 5:37b-47

full in His unsparing analysis of their own condition of mind and heart. They had, as He said, first of all, no adequate discernment of God, having "neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form." That is, they had no touch with God, and knew little about Him. They had no understanding of God's Word, nor fruitfulness of it, in

⁶On the propositions in this paragraph, see in order the following verses: John 5:19-21, 22-23, 24, 25, 26-27, 28-29. It is notable that Christ called Himself (in verse 25) the *Son of God*, when He was defending His own Divine Nature.

their hearts. They refused to accept the conclusions of their own Scriptures, which clearly bore testimony of Christ the Savior.

But that was not all, nor the worst. The rulers of Israel, as Christ told them on this occasion, had no love of God in their hearts. They could not believe; because they were seeking, not after faith and life and service, but after their own glory among men. Finally, they rejected the testimony of Moses himself, on whom they claimed to set their hopes. "If ye believe not his Writings," the Savior concluded, "how shall ye believe my words?"

But these words of fearless and faithful exhibition of their own inner souls, had no hopeful effect upon the rulers of Israel, who were persecuting the Son of God. They were bitterly set against Him; and they only waited another opportunity to renew their attack.

(2) *The Charge of Unlawfully Approving Works of Necessity on the Sabbath Day.* Such men as those analyzed above by the Lord Jesus could not be satisfied to neglect, nor even to reject, the Son of God. They had to find either a cause or a pretext for active resistance. For further opportunity for opposition they had not long to wait; since they were ready to misinterpret any situation, so as to make it serve their

determined purposes. The coveted occasion soon presented itself, in the following incident, which involved a work of necessity on the Sabbath Day.

The record reads: "At that season Jesus went on the Sabbath Day through the cornfields; and His disciples were an hungered, and began to pluck ears of corn, and to eat. But the Pharisees, when they saw it, said unto Him, 'Behold, Thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the Sabbath.'" The needs of the disciples called for the

thing that they did. But the enemies of Jesus, overlooking the deeper intentions of Law, condemned the Lord for allowing this work of necessity on the Sabbath Day. They hoped, by this superficial charge, to discredit Christ's previous argument for a necessary harmony between His own legal sanctions and the ancient Law of God.

But they did not succeed, as they had hoped. Jesus, in making his answer on this occasion, showed the profound harmony that exists between the works of necessity and the deeper purpose of all Law. Law is a ministering servant, which always gives

**Disciples Plucking
Grain on the Sab-
bath Day**

Matthew 12:1-8

Mark 2:23-28

Luke 6:1-5

**1. Nature of
Charge: Works of
Necessity Con-
demned by Jews**

proper place to Necessity. Thus David set aside a law, for the moment, in order that he might, under great duress, satisfy his own physical needs. Thus the priests break

2. Christ's Reply: the letter of the Sabbath Law, by working in
Harmony between the Temple on the Sabbath Day; but they
Law and Necessity were justified under the necessities involved in the rendering of spiritual services. Law must work in harmony with the necessities of life. So must the Law of the Sabbath, which was "made for man," provide in its requirements for the works of necessity: but this makes no provisions, of course, for common Sabbath desecration. Under this principle, that what the disciples had done was right because it was necessary, Jesus justified what He had at least silently approved in them on that Sabbath Day.

But Jesus did more than merely justify Himself. He made this justifying principle of law the basis of a counter charge against His enemies for their ignorance of
3. Christ's Counter- the Law of God. He told them, in effect,
Charge: Enemies that they needed to read their Bibles, and to
Ignorant of the Law reform their conceptions of Law. They needed to learn that the Sabbath, and even the Temple, sacred as they both were, had ends to serve beyond themselves. They needed to learn that "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." They needed to learn that mercy is superior to sacrifice as a fulfillment of Divine Law.

This counter-charge was Christ's deeper defense of Himself, and of the truth. If the Jews had known the truth, they would not have made the charges which they had made. Had they known the inner truth of Law, they "would not have condemned the guiltless." They would have known also that "the Son of Man was Lord of the Sabbath." But those hostile Jews had not even an interest in the true spiritual meaning of Law. That fact was evident in the next, and last, level to which they descended to make their final attack upon the Lord Jesus in this period of His Life-Work.

(3) *The Sullen Resentment of the Jews against Christ for Doing a Work of Mercy on the Sabbath Day.* In their final opposition to Jesus, His enemies were so hardened in heart as to resent, with sullen madness, even a work of mercy which the Lord did on the Sabbath Day: This final attack, which was not openly developed by His enemies, took place on another Sabbath Day, in the

Healing a Man with
a Withered Hand
Matthew 12:9-14
Mark 3:1-6
Luke 6:6-11

synagogue, where Jesus healed the man whose right hand was withered.

The order of events was as follows: Jesus, having come from the previous encounter with the Pharisees, had entered into the synagogue, possibly one week later than the

1. Circumstances of This Healing

preceding incident. There was a man in the synagogue whose right hand was withered. The scribes and the Pharisees were present, watching whether Jesus would heal the man on the Sabbath Day. They were trying to find an occasion for accusation against the Lord. In their eagerness, they seem even to have suggested the healing, in that they asked Jesus whether it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath.

Jesus, however, understood their motives, and was ready with an adequate answer. First, He cited the ancient law which required the showing of mercy even to a sheep that had fallen into a pit on the Sabbath Day. He asked them to get their answer from that law; but they refused to make any reply. Then He pointed to the superior value of a man above that of a sheep, and deduced the conclusion that "it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath Day." After this statement of the case in advance, Christ commanded the afflicted man to stand forth in the midst of them all.

Then there was a pause in the course of events. Perhaps it was some motion of the enemy just then that caused Jesus to propound to them this question: "Is it lawful on the Sabbath Day to do good, or to do harm? to save life, or to kill?" That was a test question; and His enemies knew it very well. They spoke no reply; but their sullen silence was a definite answer. Jesus knew their thoughts, and looked upon them with anger, being grieved at the hardness of their hearts. Then He commanded the afflicted man to stretch forth his hand. And he stretched it forth: and his hand was healed.

The sullen re-action of the Pharisees had a very definite meaning. They were offended at the deed that was done; or they at least pretended that they were offended.

2. Significance of This Sullen Re-Action against Jesus

They denied, in effect, the lawfulness of deeds of mercy on the Sabbath Day. It seemed as if they had resented the lesson which Jesus had given them in the previous encounter. They were filled with madness at the Lord Himself. They joined hands with the Herodians in their opposition. After this wicked alliance, they went out at once, and took counsel how

they might destroy Jesus. Henceforth, they were avowed enemies of Jesus; and there was no hope of His ever reaching them with His words of Divine truth.

Thus this period of typical responses to Jesus came to a close. Those weeks of the Lord's public ministry were weeks of great work, and many wonders. During the period two definite results were attained. There had been gathered a liberal following to the Son of God. There had also been clearly defined the sources, the nature, the motives, the purposes, and the methods, of the opposition against Him and His work. With these facts clearly before His mind, the Lord Jesus Christ turned His attention next to the organization of His Kingdom in the world.

PART III

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE KINGDOM
OF CHRIST

THE KINGDOM APPOINTED TO JESUS CHRIST

"The Sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall be the gathering of the people." *Genesis 49:10.*

"Now therefore so shalt thou say unto My servant David, Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, 'And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy Seed after thee, and I will establish the Throne of His Kingdom for ever. I will be His Father, and He shall be My Son. . . . And thine House and thy Kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy Throne shall be established for ever.' So did Nathan speak unto David." *2. Samuel 7:8-16.*

"But unto the Son He saith, 'Thy Throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy Kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows.'" *Hebrews 1:8-9.*

"For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulders: and His Name shall be called *Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace*. Of the increase of His Government and peace there shall be no end, upon the Throne of David, and upon his Kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this." *Isaiah 9:6-7.*

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee; He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." *Zechariah 9:9.*

"'My Kingdom is not of this world' Pilate therefore said unto Him, 'Art Thou a King then?' Jesus answered, 'Thou sayest that I am a King. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice.'" *John 18:36-37.*

"Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His Anointed, saying, 'Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.' He that sitteth in the Heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath, and vex them in His sore displeasure. 'Yet have I set My King upon My Holy Hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto Me, *Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee. Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.*' Be wise now therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him." *Psalms 2:1-12.*

CHAPTER VI

THE KINGDOM: THE TWELVE APOSTLES

"For the Kingdom of God is not in word, but in power." *1. Corinthians 4:20.*

"And ye shall bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning." *John 15:27.*

"For we . . . were eyewitnesses of His Majesty." "And we are His witnesses of these things." *2. Peter 1:16; Acts 5:32.*

"But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the Word." *Acts 6:4.*

The opening of this chapter marks a new stage in the Life-Work of the Lord Jesus Christ. He began at this time to organize His Kingdom in the world. His Kingdom is a spiritual Kingdom; and the process of organizing that Kingdom consisted of two things. First He selected the Twelve Apostles, who were to be the personal under-leaders of the Kingdom and its work. Secondly, He announced, in the "Sermon on the Mount," the inner spiritual principles of the Kingdom: principles that should be built into the lives of His disciples, and so characterize them as citizens of His Kingdom.

That was the new work now undertaken. Up to this time, the Lord Jesus had been busy presenting Himself before the world, and in making Himself clearly understood by the world. He had been born, and had grown up, as the unique Child of all history.

New Turn in the Progress of Christ's Life-Work He had been formally proclaimed, by many infallible witnesses, to be the Son of God. He had carefully defined the Way of Life. He had gone among the people, teaching and healing, and thus giving the people an opportunity to know Him near at hand, and to define their attitudes toward Him.

The results of this previous work were of two kinds. The Son of God had become very popular with the general public. His work had, however, stirred up the rulers of the Jews to a well-defined and irreconcilable opposition. Confronted with this situation of popularity and opposition, the Lord Jesus began calmly to organize His spiritual Kingdom. The Twelve Apostles, whom He chose as the first step in this organization, are to be studied in this chapter.

I. The Choosing of the Twelve Apostles

The ordinary process of organizing an enterprise begins with the election, or selection, of officers, in whom, through whom, and under whom, the enterprise may have an expression of itself.

In somewhat the same way, Christ began this organization by selecting twelve men, known afterward as the Twelve Apostles, to be the human foundation, and the **"Ye are Witnesses of These Things"** working center, of His Kingdom in the world.

1. The Background of This Choice of the Twelve. This new period of the Lord's work opened with a summarizing glimpse at the popularity of the Son of God, which He recognized as a hindrance to this special work which He now had in hand.

This general popularity was wide-spread. His work in Galilee "teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness among the people," had caused the report of Him to reach beyond Galilee, and multitudes were coming to Him daily from the surrounding countries. As a general rule, the people proclaimed Him to be the Son of God, and crowded upon Him so much that He could scarcely do His work.

This popularity of Jesus was summarized in the record of a typical day's labours by the Sea of Galilee. Great multitudes had come to Jesus from Galilee, and from Judea, and from Jerusalem, and from Idumea, and from beyond the Jordan, and from Tyre and Sidon, having heard what great things He did. The people were eager for His ministry. They crowded upon Him so closely as even to interfere with the services which they desired Him to render.

Christ desired to escape this pressure from the crowd. He therefore secured a small boat, and pushed out in it a little way into the sea, and then spoke to the multitude on the shore. Besides this pressure from the people, Christ felt also the inner pressure of other particular work, which was being interfered with by these increasing multitudes. Therefore, without neglecting the needs of those who had already come to Him, He earnestly urged upon them that they should not further advertise His work. His great central desire was to devote His attention immediately to the organizing of His Kingdom.

2. The Method of Choosing the Twelve Apostles. The Lord's method of choosing the Twelve Apostles was very simple. The event, as seen in the records, moved with quiet dignity, and was free from all signs of spectacular worldly display. After

one of His busy days of popular ministry, Jesus withdrew to a mountain alone, and continued all night in prayer. When the

Prayer and Choice

Mark 3:13-19

Luke 6:12-19

morning had come, He called to Him His disciples. From among those who came He chose twelve, whom He also called *Apostles*. Such was the order of events. The facts

were simple, but very suggestive. The Son of God spent the whole night in prayer, and then chose the twelve men who should become the organizing center of His Kingdom on earth.

3. *The Subsequent Divisions of Christ's Work.* The Son of God organized His Kingdom under circumstances of general pop-

ularity, and of rising opposition. These cir-

**Three-Fold Work
of Jesus Christ**

cumstances gave rise to the three lines of activity to which the Lord Jesus henceforth gave most of His attention. He continued

His public ministry of preaching, and teaching, and healing. He gave a great deal of time, both in public and in private, to the instruction and training of the Twelve Apostles, who were to represent Him to all the world. He constantly defended the Truth against His enemies, who opposed Him and the Kingdom which He was organizing in the world.

These three lines of activity were often formally separated. They were clearly recognizable, as a rule, even when they were intermixed in the same situation. From about this time, there was also a corresponding change in the Lord's discourses. Henceforth He spoke more than ever in His character of *the Teacher*. He gave His energies definitely to the analysis, explanation, definition, illustration, and defense, of the Truth. More than ever, also, He seemed to be Divine: for in all of His dealing with the Truth, He showed an insight and an authority that was possible only to the Son of God.

II. A Study of the Twelve Apostles

Any formal study of the Twelve Apostles must be somewhat complicated. Their names have been given in four formal lists in the New Testament. These catalogues of

**"Eyewitnesses, and
Ministers of the
Word."**

Luke 1:2

the names will be given in the next section below. Some of the Twelve had already appeared in the earlier periods of Christ's Life-Work. They were all disciples previous to

this date. Some of them, however, emerged from the common crowd, and stood forth as individuals, for the first time when Jesus called them to be among the Apostles.

There were also subordinate groups within the whole group, which present some problems. The order of the several names, as given in the several lists, is almost uniform; yet there are a few slight variations which have to be considered. Each one of the Twelve has his own individual history, which must be reviewed. And the office to which they were called had a definite function in the organization and progress of the Kingdom, requiring of them certain qualifications which need to be analyzed. These points, and others, help to complicate the study of the Twelve Apostles, which is now to be undertaken.

1. *The Names of the Twelve Apostles.* The names of the Apostles, as already suggested, were given formally four times in the Scriptures. In those lists, as given below, it will be seen that four of the Apostles always occupy the same position.

"Twelve, Whom He Also Named Apostles"

Those fixed positions, with the general uniformity in the order of the other names associated therewith, have definitely marked off the sub-groups of the Twelve. The groups were always the same; but the order of individual names within the groups sometimes varied, as is suggested in the following arrangement.

<i>Matthew 10:2-4</i>	<i>Mark 3:16-19</i>	<i>Luke 6:14-16</i>	<i>Acts 1:13</i>
SIMON PETER and ANDREW	SIMON PETER JAMES	SIMON PETER and ANDREW	SIMON PETER and JAMES
JAMES and JOHN	JOHN ANDREW	JAMES and JOHN	JOHN and ANDREW
PHILIP and BARTHOLOMEW	PHILIP BARTHOLOMEW	PHILIP and BARTHOLOMEW	PHILIP and THOMAS
THOMAS and MATTHEW	MATTHEW THOMAS	MATTHEW and THOMAS	BARTHOLOMEW and MATTHEW
JAMES and THADDAEUS	JAMES THADDAEUS	JAMES and SIMON	JAMES and SIMON
SIMON and	SIMON	JUDAS and	JUDAS and
JUDAS ISCARIOT	JUDAS ISCARIOT	JUDAS ISCARIOT	JUDAS ISCARIOT

2. *The Sub-Groups of the Twelve Apostles.* The Twelve Apostles, as seen above, were sub-divided into four smaller groups, and the integrity of each sub-group was maintained always in the several catalogues of the names. Within the smaller groups the names varied in point of arrangement; but the names

themselves were always the same. In this study the several Apostles will be considered in connection with the sub-groups to which, respectively, their several names have been assigned, as indicated in the above tabulation. The general plan of study will be to consider first the sub-group as a whole, and then the individuals in that group.

From the lists of names given above it is plain that Simon Peter, Philip, James, the son of Alphaeus, and Judas Iscariot had always fixed places in the minds of all the writers who have formally given the names of the Apostles. This arrangement of names is not accidental. Each of these four names stands at the head of a subordinate group of the Apostles, as will appear in the further study of the Twelve. The first group consisted of Peter and Andrew, and James and John.

**1. The Study of
Group I:
Simon Peter
Andrew
James
John**

The personnel and the position of this group never changed. The same is true of all the other groups. Within Group I, however, there is a slight, but easily explained, variation in the order of the names of the two pairs of brothers constituting this group. Peter always had the first place. His particular qualities of character and faith, his impulsive headlong nature, and His readiness to speak his sentiments on all occasions, gave him a position of natural leadership, and won for him a fixed place among the Apostles at the head of Group I.

Matthew and Luke, in his *Gospel*, gave all the names in this group in the same order. They looked at the Life of Jesus *from the beginning*, with special attention to circumstantial developments. Having made an exception in the position assigned to Peter, these writers followed the natural order of events. That is, Andrew first found Peter, and then James found John. The underlying principle was to give the names in the same order in which the several men originally came to Jesus. The exception was made in order to place Peter at the head of this group.

Mark and Luke, in *The Acts*, changed this order, giving the names of Peter, James, and John, first in the list. Mark made the change for this reason. He was more interested in stirring events than in accidental personal relationships. He looked at the Gospel facts from a dynamic point of view. Naturally, therefore, he emphasized the relations of men as they appeared in action. This view of the matter accounts fully for his bringing together that "inner circle" of the Apostles,—Peter, James, and John,—

who alone were privileged to be with the Savior on several important occasions. Those three men, through this intimate fellowship with Jesus on special occasions, had come to be thought of as a special group of the Twelve, set apart from, and exalted, at least in point of privilege, above the other Apostles.

Luke, by the time he wrote *The Acts*, had shifted his point of view from that which he maintained in his *Gospel*. In *The Acts*, he was looking backward upon the Gospel facts from an advanced historical point of view. Naturally, therefore, from this advanced point of view, Luke saw and expressed past events in terms of historical development. Thus Luke, in this later writing, also gave emphatic recognition to this "inner circle" of the Apostles, which had emerged as a conspicuous fact of past history.

However, this truth should be kept in mind. Neither Mark nor Luke had any desire to discount Andrew. They meant nothing of that kind. They were, in making these changes, only recognizing a fact of history, which was obvious to their immediate readers, and also emphatic when seen from their respective points of view. Both of these sacred writers agree in placing Andrew always in the first group of the Apostles.

The individual members of Group I, as already indicated, represented two pairs of brothers. Two of these brothers were Simon Peter and Andrew, who lived in Bethsaida and Capernaum, and were engaged in the business of fishing on the Sea of Galilee. They seem to have had sufficient wealth for good social standing. They were unlike in personality. Peter was outspoken and assertive in a public way; but Andrew was quiet and content to work in a quiet personal way. Both had been thoroughly prepared, under the ministry of John the Baptist, for recognizing and accepting the Son of God when He should appear. From the purely business point of view, these brothers probably made great sacrifice when they so promptly left their business and followed Jesus. But that was to be expected, since these men, as disciples of John the Baptist, were definitely looking for the Coming of the Messiah.

Peter was a man of prompt energy, boldness, and endurance. These natural traits in him, which were greatly developed by his life and leadership on the sea, asserted themselves in all of his personal and spiritual activities. He spoke the native Galilean accent, perhaps in a conspicuous manner, a fact which betrayed,

**(2) Individuals
of Group I
First Two
Brothers**

**Simon
Peter**

or confirmed, his identity when he stood in the outer circle by the fire at the Trial of Jesus. Peter, like the other Apostles, was "unlearned and ignorant" of the professional, or rabbinical, learning, which was at that time so much emphasized among the leaders of the Jews.

Simon Peter was married, and maintained, perhaps with his brother Andrew, a home in Capernaum. Emotionally, Peter was susceptible to the extremes of fear and courage. These traits, with his tendency to misgivings under intense emotional stimulus, account for most of the irregularities of his life. But in spite of his defections at times, there was in him a constant and dependable element of solid worth, which won for him the honorable name of *Peter*, which signified *a stone*. Such was this Apostle in the eyes of his Divine Master. This same quality commended Peter to his Lord as one of the "inner circle," and gave him recognition, among the men who knew him best, as the leader of this first group of the Apostles.¹

Andrew, the other of these first two brothers, was a different type of man, though the kinship was evident in some particulars.

Andrew He was less assertive, and less in the foreground of public activities. He was, however, a faithful disciple of John the Baptist, and passed through all the stages of experience with Jesus up to this call to the Apostleship. Andrew was a man of conscience, and of a quietly ardent nature. His chief distinction was the manner of his working in a quiet way, bringing men to Christ,—first, his own brother Simon, and later, the Greeks who desired to see Jesus. Andrew had a Greek name, and was the only one of the Apostles, except Philip, to have that distinction. He was perhaps naturally sociable; and certainly he was sensitive to the human element in his environment.²

This last named trait was brought into action vividly in the following instances. In the desert, when Christ fed the Five Thousand, the general group of the Apostles were perplexed over the problem of securing food for the multitude. But Andrew had already observed the lad with the basket, and knew definitely the number of loaves and fishes in the basket. Andrew's imagination dwelt on the interests of the people. Thus, when Jesus had outlined the fearful calamities that should befall Jerusalem, Andrew

¹For references on Simon Peter, see the following Scriptures: *Mark* 10:28; *John* 1:19-42; *Matthew* 26:73; *Luke* 22:59; *Acts* 4:13; *Matthew* 8:14-15; *Mark* 1:29; *Luke* 4:38; *John* 1:42; *Matthew* 16:16-19. See also "Simon Peter" in the Index.

²On Andrew, besides the above references, see *John* 1:35-46; 12:20-22; 6:8-9; *Mark* 13:3-4; and "Andrew" in the Index.

seems to have been unable to free his mind from that picture of distress. Therefore it was he who later led the other members of his Group to renew this topic, and ask Jesus when those fearful things should come to pass. Yet Andrew, notwithstanding the general keenness of his interests, was not chosen as one of the "inner circle" of the Apostles.

James and John, the other two members of this first group, were also brothers. Their parents, Zebedee and Salome, had a home in Bethsaida, where the two sons probably made their home also. The family probably enjoyed a goodly measure of wealth. At least such circumstances are suggested by the mention of hired servants, and also from the fact that Salome ministered to the Lord out of her own substance.

Second Two Brothers

These two brothers, following the trade of their father, had become partners with Simon and Andrew as fishermen on the Sea of Galilee. James and John were strong and active men. In point of character, they were definite, direct, impatient, and uncompromising. They had a keen sense of the right, and a strong conscience for duty. They were therefore ready for a rapid and summary treatment of what they deemed to be wrong. So strong in them were these characteristics, that the Lord named these two brothers "Sons of Thunder." Both of them, like Simon and Andrew, were disciples of John the Baptist, and both were prepared, therefore, for the immediate recognition and reception of the Son of God.

The spiritual preparation of James and John was greatly aided, no doubt, by their parents, both of whom seem to have been early Christians. Zebedee was willing for his sons to leave their business, and respond at once to the Master's call. Salome was a zealous worker in the Lord's Kingdom. Although she was, at one time, somewhat over-ambitious for her sons, yet she was always faithful to Jesus. She was devoted personally to the Lord, ministering to Him in His work at her own expense. She was with Him on His last journey to Jerusalem before His Crucifixion. She was also present when Jesus died on the Cross, and was early at His grave on the Resurrection morning to anoint the Lord's Body. Doubtless she was faithful always in the instruction of her sons, who were well taught in Bible truth, though they were, like Peter and Andrew, unlearned in the rabbinical lore of that time.

These two brothers, James and John, passed with ready responsiveness through all of the early stages of Christ's ministry.

Their progress in the Kingdom was definite, typical, rapid, and well nigh perfect. Five separate times they responded to the Master's call. These calls and responses were as follows: (1) to friendly acquaintance with Jesus; (2) to intimate friendship with Him; (3) to permanent discipleship under the Lord; (4) to full Apostleship in His Kingdom; and (5) to complete dedication of themselves, even unto death, in His service. They accepted the Lord Jesus immediately in the beginning of His public ministry, and were intimate and faithful in their devotions to Him and to His Kingdom.

James was the older of the two brothers, and is mentioned first when their names come together. James was one of the three members of the Lord's "inner circle," the

**James, the Son
of Zebedee**

other two being Peter and John. With this selected group, James was privileged to witness the following events, which were closed to the other Apostles: the raising of Jairus' daughter, the Transfiguration of Jesus, and the agony of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. Following the lead of Andrew, James joined with others in asking Jesus about the coming of the great Judgment. James was active in the work of the Early Church, as already suggested, and he was the first of the Apostles to meet the martyr's death.³

John, the brother of James, occupies a very large place in the work and writings of the entire New Testament period. He was one of the first disciples of Jesus, and the very last to write his testimony to the life and work of the Divine Savior. Like James, John was of an impassioned nature. At one

**John the
Apostle**

time he was ready to drink the Lord's cup of sufferings; and at another time John desired to silence summarily those who conformed not to his ideas of following his Master. He was ready also, upon one occasion, to call down fire from Heaven upon the Samaritans because they had not received the Lord Jesus on one of His journeys through their country.

The same denunciatory spirit in John blazes forth in his *Letters* at times. This is especially true when he expresses his uncompromising attitude toward heresies and their evil fruitage in the lives of men. Some have even heard the roll of thunder in the

³On Salome, see *Luke* 8:3; *Mark* 16:1; *Luke* 23:55; 24:1; *Mark* 15:40-41; 16:1-2; and on James, see *Acts* 4:13; *John* 1:37; *Matthew* 4:21; *Luke* 5:11; *Matthew* 10:1; *John* 21:15-22; *Mark* 5:37; *Matthew* 17:1; 26:37; *Mark* 13:3-4; and *Acts* 1:13; 12:1-3. See also "James," "Salome," and "Zebedee," in the Index.

very literary style of John: as, for example, in the opening sentence of his *Gospel*: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Yet John was the Apostle of love. He was that "disciple whom Jesus loved." He lived close to the heart of his Lord and Master; and many of the words of his testimony have been most precious to men, and most effective in bringing men to love and trust and serve the Lord Jesus Christ.

One other fact of great interest in the life of John was the close association which he had with the Apostle Peter. They were partners as fishermen on the Sea of Galilee. They were together as disciples of John the Baptist. They were probably called by Jesus at the same time. They were intimately as-

Simon Peter and John

sociated as members of the "inner circle" of the Apostles. They were sent together by Jesus, on Thursday afternoon of the Passion Week, to prepare a place for the Passover. On that memorable evening at the Supper, it was John to whom Peter beckoned to ask Jesus who should be the traitor.

Later, on that same night, both Peter and John followed Jesus after He had been arrested. Both were present at least during a part of the Trial of their Lord. John was at the Cross, while Peter was repenting of his sin in denying his Lord and Master; but they soon found each other after the death of Jesus on the Cross. They were both at the same place when Mary Magdalene first announced the Empty Tomb of Jesus. They ran together to investigate the situation thus reported to them. They probably tarried together at Jerusalem after the Resurrection. However, they were soon fishing together again on the Sea of Galilee.

After the Ascension, Peter and John resumed their former places in Group I of the Apostles during the ten days of prayer leading up to Pentecost. A few days later, they "went up together into the Temple at the hour of prayer." They were arrested at the same time, and testified together before the hostile court of the Jews. They probably counseled together when the first deacons were chosen for the Early Church, and were together at Jerusalem after the death of the first martyr Stephen. Later they visited Samaria together, having been sent to that city by the Church in Jerusalem, in connection with the revival which was being conducted by Philip, the Deacon, in Samaria. Long afterward, they, with James, were accounted by Paul to be the pillars of the mother Church in Jerusalem, where they united in giving to Paul, after his conversion, the right hand

of fellowship as the Lord's Apostle to the Gentiles. Perhaps these notes could be extended from the sacred records: certainly they could be greatly extended if all were known in the unwritten labors of these two best known Apostles in Group I.⁴

One distinguishing thing about this first group of the Apostles is the history of their early spiritual relations with, and early attitude toward, the Son of God. All four

(3) Early Relations of Group I to Christ members of this group had been disciples of John the Baptist. They were, therefore, especially prepared in mind and in heart for the appearance of the Son of God. Being thus prepared, these men emerged at once, above the common crowd, into a positive relation to the Divine Savior. They are the typical perfect product of John's work in preparing the way for the Lord.

Furthermore, it is possible, with reasonable certainty, to follow these men in their progressive responses to the Son of God through all the stages of His activity up to the period and work now under consideration. When the Son of God, in the first period of His public ministry, stood forth so that the world might recognize His Divine Nature, these men saw in Him the Lamb of God, the Messiah of Promise, the Savior of the World. When He defined the Way of Life through faith and service, these men were, in all probability, among "the disciples" who were present, and drank deepest of His gracious words. In all their responses, they were always ready, voluntary, definite, and active.

Therefore, when the Son of God, by active instruction and kindly ministry, invited men to define their attitude toward Himself, these men completely and beautifully identified themselves with the Lord of Life. They stood forth as the first believers to be individualized above the common crowd; and they kept pace with the progress of the Master's Kingdom up to the time of its formal organization. When Jesus called out from His disciples those who should be the apostolic foundation of His Kingdom in the world, there is no surprise that He should honor Simon and Andrew, and James and John, as the first group among His Twelve Apostles. Nor is there surprise at their response. From the first, they had shown deep-moving currents of spiritual sympathy with the Son of God. Willingly and steadily, they had

⁴On John, besides the above references on James, see *Mark* 3:17; *Matthew* 20:22; *Luke* 12:49-50; *Mark* 10:35-45; *Luke* 9:49; 9:50-56; 1. *John* 2:18-22; 2. *John* 7-11; 3. *John* 3, 10; *John* 1:1; and "John" in the index.

On the relations of Peter and John, see *Luke* 22:8; *John* 13:24; 18:16-27; *Matthew* 26:57-75; *Mark* 14:53-72; *Luke* 22:54-62; *John* 18:12-27; *Luke* 22:62; *John* 19:25-27; *John* 20:4-6; 20:26; 21:1-14, 21; *Acts* 1:13; 3:1-26; 4:1-33; 6:1-6; 8:1; 8:14-25; and *Galatians* 2:9.

been borne on those spiritual currents to this moment of supreme privilege, when they should become first in the foundations of Christ's Kingdom among men.

**2. The Study of
Group II:
Philip
Bartholomew
Matthew
Thomas**

The second group of the Apostles was likewise composed of four men, who were always associated in this group. These four men were Philip and Bartholomew, and Matthew and Thomas. This group is almost as definite, well-defined, and unvarying as the first.

The order in which the members of this group were brought together reveals a conscious underlying principle of uniformity,

**(1) Order of the
Names in
Group II**

though there are two exceptions to the regular order. The name of Philip is always first in the group. He was the fifth disciple, and the first in this group of the Apostles, to

stand forth, individualized from the common crowd, as recognizing the Son of God. The second name in the regular order is that of Bartholomew, or Nathanael, as John called him, whom Philip found and brought to Jesus (*John* 1:43-51). The third in this group is Matthew, or Levi, whom Jesus called from the place of toll, where Matthew was busy as a collector of the Roman revenues. He was the seventh of the Twelve Apostles who had emerged already as an individual among the many disciples of Jesus.⁵

The last of the four in this group was Thomas, who was unknown in the Gospel records up to this time. In regular order, the name of Thomas is last in the group. Matthew, doubtless from delicate personal reserve, has, however, placed the name of Thomas above his own in the list of names given by himself. Luke also, after following the regular order in his Gospel, varied from the order in *Acts*, giving Thomas a position above that of Matthew and Bartholomew. Perhaps Luke thus advanced the name of Thomas in this later list because that Apostle, through the incidents connected with his doubts of the Risen Christ, had been given a conspicuous place in the mind of the early church.⁶

Among the individual members of Group II, Philip⁷ and Bartholomew seem to have had the closest personal relations before their call to the Apostleship. Philip was probably born in Capernaum, though he lived at this time in Bethsaida. He had

⁵See Matthew 9:9-13, and the parallel passages, previously discussed in Chapter V, page 110.

⁶See *John* 20:26-29.

been associated locally with Peter and Andrew, and may have been a fellow-fisherman with them on the Sea of Galilee. It is

not known that Philip was a disciple of John the Baptist. There is evidence, however, that (2) Individuals of Group II he was a student of the Scriptures,⁸ and that he also had an early knowledge of "Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph." Philip was the first man whom Jesus *sought out* and called into discipleship.

Philip, being immediately convinced that Jesus was the Savior, sought out Nathanael, who is more often called Bartholomew,⁹ and brought him to the Lord. Bartholomew, the son of Tolmai, lived in Cana of Galilee, and this personal work of Philip may have involved the journey of several miles to that city. This element of distance, if true, would tend greatly to heighten the significance of Bartholomew's coming so immediately, and also of the Lord's previous knowledge of the conduct and character of this man. Bartholomew was a man of prayer, who probably gave much time to the study of his Bible. Living at Cana, he felt the local prejudices against the neighboring city of Nazareth, yet he was without guile. He was a man of fearless candor, but always open to conviction as to the truth. He was willing, after some debate with Philip, to come to Jesus, and to be convinced that Jesus was the Son of God, and the King of Israel.

Matthew and Thomas, the other members of Group II, are usually seen in close association among the Apostles. Matthew,¹⁰

⁷Philip, like Andrew, had a Greek name, and the two men are associated in their later activities. They were both together when Jesus tested Philip, who was familiar with the desert situation near Bethsaida, concerning the source of food for feeding the five thousand (*John* 6:5-9). They were together again when, possibly because of their Greek names, the Greeks approached them with the request to see Jesus (*John* 12:20-22). A slight exception to this usual association occurred once at least, during the Passion Week, when Thomas joined with Philip in seeking a fuller revelation of the Father. (*John* 14:1-9). But it is probable that Philip was again with Andrew, as the "two other disciples," who accompanied Peter and the other members of Groups I and II on their fishing expedition after the Resurrection (*John* 21:1-3). This constant association of the two men may have influenced Mark and Luke, in the *Acts*, to place Andrew last in Group I, thus bringing him next to Philip, who always heads Group II. The exception to this association, as noted above, suggests a definite reason for Luke, in *Acts*, placing the name of Thomas next to that of Philip in this second group of the Apostles. (See the Index.)

⁸See *John* 1:45.

⁹There is general agreement that Nathanael and Bartholomew were one and the same person. Matthew, Mark, and Luke never speak of him as Nathanael, while John never mentions the name Bartholomew. But there is no doubt that the two names apply to the same man, whose regular position was second in the second group of the Apostles, or sixth in the whole group of the Twelve. As supporting this generally accepted view, it may be noted that John mentioned Nathanael as present in that intimate gathering of Groups I and II of the Apostles on the Sea of Galilee after the Resurrection of Jesus (*John* 21:1-3). Bartholomew had emerged individually as an early and enthusiastic disciple of Christ, though little else is known of his personal history previous to his call to the Apostleship. From the last reference above, it might be inferred that he was a fisherman, though his presence on that occasion may have been due to a close personal and spiritual sympathy with other members of that general group. (See the Index.)

whose original name was Levi, was the son of Alphaeus. Being an official tax-gatherer for the Roman Government, Matthew was called "the publican." As such, he would naturally be held in low esteem by his own countrymen, who chafed under the rule of Rome. Matthew was stationed in Capernaum, where he collected the Roman customs on the important route of traffic from Damascus to the Mediterranean ports. He was sitting at his place of toll when he was first called into discipleship by the Lord.¹¹

Matthew, who was a man of quick and definite decision, had responded heartily, being deeply touched by this recognition from the Savior of the World. Matthew's gratitude, and the new life within him, soon found a right expression in the desire to extend his blessing to others. Almost immediately he made a supper for Jesus, for the express purpose of bringing together his own friends under the direct influence of the Son of God. Thus Matthew, previous to his being called into the Apostleship, had emerged into personal view, and may have become already associated with Thomas, through some such occasion as that of the supper mentioned above.

Thomas,¹² who is closely associated with Matthew in this group of the Twelve, is the first of the Apostles of whose life almost nothing is known previous to this occasion when he was called to be an Apostle. He was a dweller in Galilee, and was probably a fisherman by trade. He appears, from later references, to have been of a doubting nature, and even pessimistic at times, as some have felt when reading the few expressions of his inner thought. The truth seems to be that Thomas was merely unable to think clearly in abstract terms. To others, who think easily in the abstract, he would naturally seem slow in grasping and interpreting spiritual things that were invisible and intangible. He desired the abstract and spiritual to be translated into something concrete, something tangible, something practical in terms of human life and conduct.

¹⁰Matthew was the son of Alphaeus; but this father, being a different man from Alphaeus, father of James the Less, is otherwise unknown (*Mark* 2:14). Matthew probably held a subordinate, though prominent, position under the head farmer of the Roman taxes, and was well known in that capacity among his own countrymen. Hence Luke felt fully definite to speak of Matthew merely as "a publican, named Levi" (*Luke* 5:27). Matthew, in his own Gospel, always speaks of himself in the third person objectively, referring to himself at the time of his original call into discipleship merely as "a man, called Matthew, sitting at the place of toll" (*Matt.* 9:9). It was his early desire to bring his friends and Jesus together at the supper which, greatly expanded later, led him to write the *Gospel of Matthew* for his own countrymen. (See the Index.)

¹¹See note 5 above.

¹²"Thomas, called Didymus." That is the regular way in which John speaks of Thomas (*John* 11:16; 21:2), seeming thereby to signify that he was one of

Thomas insisted upon being shown proofs and practical meanings of the truth. But when he had seen the proofs, his convictions were profound. When truth had clarified itself in his mind as duty, and duty had in turn become a course of action for him, the full strength of his character appeared. He was slow to believe, perhaps even slow to understand the leadings of a truth. But when he did get the life-meaning of the truth, he would follow to the end. Even when death seemed to lurk in his pathway, the fear of it did not terrify Thomas.

The members of Group II, in their earlier relations to Christ, differed in some particulars from those in Group I. For one thing, it is not clear that any member of this group was a disciple of John the Baptist. It is true that Philip and Bartholomew had emerged individually above the common

(3) Early Relations of Group II to Christ

crowd at an early date, while John was still actively heralding the Coming of Christ; but there is no conclusive evidence that either of those men had been personally directed by John to the Son of God. It is true that both of them were pious men, and students of the Scriptures; but neither of them gave that unhesitating response that was given by the four men in Group I, who, as disciples of John, had been especially prepared for the recognition and reception of Christ.

With the men in Group I, to see Jesus was to accept Him. With Group II, the manner of coming to discipleship was different. Jesus actively *sought for* Philip, and then *called* him into discipleship. Later Jesus held some debate with Bartholomew on the same question.¹³ To both men, their experiences with Jesus were thoroughly convincing. Doubtless they were, from that time, faithful followers of Christ.

There was one further difference. The four men in Group I were easily traced, through the successive stages of Christ's ministry, up to the calling of the Apostles. While Philip and Bartholomew had emerged early into view, it is not clear that they had re-appeared definitely in the successive periods of Christ's ministry up to the choosing of the Twelve.

twins. The idea of Thomas being "the doubter" arose more especially from his disbelieving the Resurrection of Christ, without the tangible proofs (*John* 20; 24-29). With Thomas, the conclusions of truth meant action; and he came to conclusions by slow and cautious, but positive, degrees. Though he fully expected to meet death in the journey, yet being convinced of his duty, he was willing to go with Jesus up to the raising of Lazarus (*John* 11:8-16). When Jesus spoke of His own departure, Thomas interrupted the discourse to know exactly what Jesus meant. Thomas was profoundly moved by the eloquence of physical facts. (See the Index.)

¹³See *John* 1:43-51.

Matthew and Thomas were already disciples of the Lord. Practically nothing was known of the latter until he emerged into personal view when he was called to be an Apostle. Matthew, however, had already appeared with some emphasis as an individual, in connection with the early stages of opposition to the Son of God, as described above in Chapter V. Jesus had taken notice of Matthew, and directly *called* him to be a disciple. Matthew responded immediately, his earnest zeal expressing itself on the occasion of the supper already described. Thus splendidly did Matthew appear at the first. He may have remained with Jesus; or he may have returned to his office work in Capernaum. At any rate, the reader is a little surprised, perhaps the curious reader is a little disappointed, that Matthew did not re-appear before the time when he was called to a place among this second group of the Apostles.

The third group of the Apostles contains the names of three men—James, the Less, Thaddaeus (or Judas), and Simon, the Zealot. These men, though always associated in this group, are not, either as a group or as individuals, so well known as the members of the preceding groups. The particular facts about these three Apostles are very meager indeed.

**3. The Study of
Group III:
James, the Less
Thaddaeus
Simon, the Zealot**

The order of the names in this group, as given by all the writers, assigns the first place to James. Matthew and Mark gave the second place to Thaddaeus, and the third to Simon. If these three men, as has been suggested, were brothers in the household of Jesus at Nazareth, then the above order of their names is probably the natural order of their ages.¹⁴ Luke, however, gave to Thaddaeus his other name Judas, and exchanged places between him and Simon. Perhaps these changes were only psychological, and made by Luke in order to bring the two Judases closer together in the general list of the Apostles. Possibly there were other reasons for the changes. One regrets that the want of facts about these three men has left uncertain the underlying principle, or influence, which led Luke to give the names as he has given them in this group.

The individual members of this group, as already suggested, are comparatively little known. They were all disciples of Jesus from some earlier period of His ministry; but no one of them

¹⁴See *Mark* 6:3.

had emerged into personal view before they were called to be Apostles. James,¹⁵ the son of Alphaeus, or Clopas (Cleopas),

according as the name is given in the Greek
(2) Individuals or in the Hebrew, may have been a cousin
of Group III to Jesus, as suggested in the note below.

Later in the history of the early church, James became somewhat conspicuous, as the president of the congregation in Jerusalem, probably also as the author of the "*Epistle of James*," and still further as one who gave authoritative recognition to the Apostle Paul.

Thaddaeus,¹⁶ known also as Lebbaeus, and as Jude, or Judas, was the son of Alphaeus, and hence a brother to the James of this group of Apostles. Some students think this to be the Jude who wrote the *Epistle of Jude*, in which they suppose him to have modestly omitted reference to his Apostleship, and to have simply called himself a servant of Christ and the brother of James. Simon,¹⁷ the Cananaean, seems also to have been a brother to the James of this group. Simon was called the Zealot, signifying his zeal for the law and the theocracy, back of which zeal there was probably an active and diligent interest in the study of God's Word.

But all of these facts and suggestions are matters drawn from the later lives of these three men. Not a word is recorded in Scriptures about any one of these men personally before they

¹⁵The main facts known about James, the Less, are as follows. He was the son of Alphaeus (*Matt.* 10:3; *Mark* 3:18; *Luke* 6:15; *Acts* 1:13), and of Mary, (who may have been a sister to the Virgin Mary). (*Mark* 15:40; *Matt.* 27:56; *Luke* 24:10). He is called the Lord's brother (*Matt.* 13:55; *Mark* 6:3; *Galatians* 1:19), and had a brother named Jude (or Judas). (*Jude* 1; *Luke* 6:16; *Acts* 1:13). James presided over the church in Jerusalem (*James* 1:1; *Acts* 12:17; 15:13-21; *Galatians* 2:9, 12), and probably wrote the *Epistle of James*.

The parentage of James has been thus explained. Cleopas is supposed to have married Mary, a sister to Mary, the Mother of Jesus. To Cleopas and Mary were born four sons: James, Joses, Jude, and Simon, and three daughters (*Mark* 6:3). Cleopas is supposed to have died, leaving his widow with this family of small children. After his death, the widowed mother is supposed to have made her home with the Virgin Mary, who was also supposed to have been left a widow since before Jesus was fully grown up. Thus the two families were supposed to have been merged together in common thought. This series of suppositions has been advanced to explain two things: First, that these four men were not brothers, but only cousins to Jesus; and second, how these men, being only cousins, should come to be thought of as the brothers of Jesus. But there are other explanations, which are equally—uncertain. (See all of the above names in the Index.)

¹⁶Thaddaeus, perhaps better known later as Jude or Judas, was distinguished from Judas, the traitor, by the other two names, Thaddaeus and Lebbaeus. It is not at all certain that this Jude wrote the *Epistle* by that name. One fact, however, is emphasized in the later life of this apostle. He was either curious or else profoundly interested on one occasion. That was when he asked Jesus how He could reveal Himself to the Apostles and not to the world (*John* 14:22). He seems always to have been with the Twelve, and was probably faithful in performing his part among them; but there are scarcely any glimpses even at his individual personality. (See the Index on Thaddaeus, and on Simon below.)

¹⁷The same is true of the Simon in this group. There are a few references bearing upon his relations to Jesus (*Matt.* 13:55; *Mark* 6:3); and upon his character as zealous for the law and the theocracy (*Matt.* 10:4; *Mark* 3:18; *Luke* 6:15; *Acts* 1:13).

were called by the Lord to be His Apostles. They were all disciples of His already, but not one of them had emerged above the common crowd. The Lord Himself had, of course, already seen and thoroughly understood them individually; but the Bible reader has not even had the privilege of seeing them. They stand forth, at the time of their call to their Apostleship, as unknown men, and continue to be the least known, both as a group and as individuals, of all the Apostles.

Were they all brothers? Were they cousins to Jesus? Were they "brothers" to Jesus, being younger children of Joseph and Mary, as some have supposed? These questions increase the surprise that these Apostles are so little known. Was there some divine purpose in suppressing most of the facts about these particular men? Their membership in the same family, if they were so, may have put them in a group apart from the other Apostles. The general obscurity of these men is sufficient to distinguish the group, even if there were no other reasons for setting them apart as a separate group. In strange contrast with this obscurity, is the abundance of detail which confronts the reader in studying the next group of the Apostles.

Finally, Judas Iscariot stood alone.¹⁸ All of the Writers have made him a group to himself. He was a marked man from the beginning. The other Apostles were all from Galilee. Judas came from Judea, as his name "Iscariot" signified "Man (Ish) of Kerioth," which was in that country. Judas was always thought of as "the Traitor." He was the son of one Simon, a man not otherwise mentioned. Judas himself was not mentioned in the Gospels before his call to the Apostleship. He became purse-bearer to the Apostles, and was probably sagacious in Business. His badness did not appear in outward action until about a year before his supreme treason.

¹⁸Scriptures bearing on the history and character of Judas Iscariot: his name (*John* 13:26-29); his father (*John*, 6:71; 13:2-26); his home (*Joshua* 15:25); the purse-bearer (*John* 12:3-8); unsuspected by others (*Matt.* 26:21-24; *John* 13:21-26); first hint of real character (*John* 6:64, 70); Christ's discourses on Mammon heard by Judas (*Matt.* 6:19-34; 13:22-23; *Luke* 16:11 *Mark* 10:25-26); possibly tempted by large contributions (*Luke* 8:1-3; *John* 12:1-8); inner character fully exhibited (*John* 12:4-6); possible tendency to reckless action (*Matt.* 26:25; *John* 13:26-30); causes of his betraying Christ—possibly held on one year before only by hope of large gain (*John* 6:64); losing the chance of 300 pence (*John* 12:5); stinging rebuke from Jesus (*John* 12:7-8); secret consciousness that his own baseness was known to Jesus (*John* 6:70); suggestions of Christ's death that would end the hope in Judas of wealth and power (*Matt.* 17:22-23); judgments upon Judas, before his treason (*Matt.* 26:21-24); his remorse and death (*Matt.* 27:3-10); the "son of perdition" (*John* 17:12); and (*2. Thes.* 2:3-12) where the Judas-spirit is seen to animate the opposition to the work of the Early Church of Christ.

The true character of Judas was probably known to Christ from the beginning. Several efforts seem to have been made by the Lord to save Judas from his own inherent weakness. Perhaps it was this desire of Christ to save Judas that gave rise, almost immediately after the choosing of the Apostles, to the sharpness of the contrast which Christ made, in the Sermon on the Mount, between the love of God and the love of Mammon. Probably Jesus had tried again to reclaim Judas, in the pressure which He brought to bear upon the Apostles at the close of His Discourse on the Bread of Life. Possibly, also, the Lord made a supreme final effort to save Judas, in the treatment of the Traitor in the Upper Room at the Passover Supper. But all of those efforts, if they were made, were in vain. Judas betrayed his Lord for only thirty pieces of silver; and then, in remorse, he went out and hanged himself.¹⁹

Christ's Knowledge and Treatment of Judas

III. The Nature and Function of the Apostolate

The Twelve Apostles, which have been studied in groups, and as individuals, were chosen by the Lord Jesus, and set apart as a separate official group among the followers of Christ. Concerning this group, several things of importance may be pointed out in a study of this kind.

1. *The Distinctive Office of the Apostles.* Of first importance is the fact, that the Apostleship was a special office. The Twelve

1. Nature of the Apostolical Office

Apostles were called for a special purpose. They were exalted to a special position, clothed with special powers, and assigned to a special mission. With these men the Lord Jesus began the formal organization of His Kingdom in the world. Common believers have always been disciples of Jesus; but the Twelve Apostles were expressly called, out from among the other disciples, into official position, and for special official functions, in relation to the Son of God, and His work in the world. The men thus exalted, and thus honored, constituted what is known as the Apostolate.

The qualifications of an Apostle were definite. Jesus "Appointed twelve," according to Mark's statement, "that they might be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach, and to have authority to cast out devils." The Apostle must have

¹⁹See *John* 6:64-71; *Matthew* 6:24-25; *John* 13:18-30; and the discussion of these several passages in their respective places in this book; also see the references on Judas in the Index.

known the Son of God through personal fellowship and experience, and with an intimate and authoritative knowledge.²⁰ For

2. Qualifications of an Apostle

Matthew 10:5-42

Mark 3:14-15

6:7-13

Luke 9:1-6

24:46-47

John 15:20-27

20:23

1. Cor. 1:17-18

1. Tim. 1:11 ff.

Acts 1:21-22

this purpose, the Apostles were given a long period of close fellowship with Jesus, Who also gave them instruction, both public and private, concerning the truths of His own Divine Nature, of His Kingdom, and of the Way of Life, and spiritual nurture in the world. These instructive experiences with the Lord Jesus, which resulted in a superior spiritual attainment on their part, qualified the Apostles for the work to which they were called.

2. *The Function of the Apostolate.* The function of the Apostolate was special and definite. The work of the Apostles, as analyzed below, was to help establish Christ's Kingdom, and to be, for all time, the special witnesses to Christ as the Divine Savior of the world. For this work they had their Call, and their Commission from the Lord Himself.

The Apostles were commissioned to a great work. As credentials of that Commission, when they went forth in those days

1. Powers and Privileges of the Apostles

to preach, the Apostles were clothed with great power. In the Name of Christ, they were given power to cast out unclean spirits, to heal all manner of sickness and disease, to cleanse the lepers, to raise the dead, and even to forgive sins. Their immediate responsibility was to know the Son of God, to testify of Him, to minister in His Name and by His power, and to preach the Way of Life through Jesus Christ to all the people. The ultimate purpose of all the privileges and powers given to the Apostles was that they, as a result of their intimate experience with the Son of God, might lay a firm foundation, for all time, for a strong faith in Jesus Christ.

The work of the Apostles may be sub-divided under four different heads. First, they were companions to Jesus, as students

²⁰The Apostles were required to have had personal knowledge and experience of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Apostleship of Paul, who became an Apostle after the Ascension of Christ, was not an exception to this fundamental requirement. Paul, before his conversion, as a young Pharisaic opponent of Jesus, may have witnessed many things which, after conversion, would be turned to favorable account. But Paul's special qualifications for the Apostleship came to him as a direct revelation from Christ (*Galatians* 1:11; 2:14). The Sacred Records have given a circumstantial account of one great personal experience which Paul had with the Son of God. (*Acts* 9:1-22; 22:1-21; 26:1-29). In his own Writings, Paul had made allusion to an even greater experience which he had passed through, revealing to him visions of Christ, and of other spiritual things, the details of which he was not allowed to make known. (2. *Corinthians* 12:1-4).

under His instruction, and as helpers in His own public and personal ministry. Again, they were sent forth by Christ on

2. Work and Witness of the Apostles

return to Him, bringing reports of their own work and of the results of that work.²¹

Furthermore, the Apostles were the workers with whom Christ first organized His Kingdom, and through whom He promoted that Kingdom in the world.²² Finally, the Twelve Apostles, directly or indirectly, gave to the world most of the Writings of the New Testament.

The Testimony of the Apostles was, therefore, of two kinds, the temporary and the permanent, the spoken and the written.

(1) Spoken and Written Testimony of the Twelve Apostles

During their own lives the several Apostles were faithful ministers of Christ, carrying His Word, if tradition may be credited, by personal ministry into many lands. But the increasing years of the Apostles, and the greater expansion of the Church, called at length for a written testimony, which would be permanent, and might become universal. Therefore, the Apostles (and others), directed by Divine Inspiration, wrote their witness for Christ in permanent form, as it is found in the New Testament Scriptures.²³

The Written Testimony of the Apostles may be summarized according to the Groups already considered. Group I, which was

(2) Written Testimony, by Groups

most intimate with the Lord Jesus, contributed eight books, and possibly ten, of the twenty-seven Books in the New Testament.

Of this number, Peter wrote two books, the *First* and *Second Epistles of Peter*. He was also intimately associated with Mark in writing the *Gospel by Mark*, and possibly with Jude in his short *Epistle*. The James of this Group may have written the *Epistle of James*, though that is not likely. John contributed the *Gospel by John*, his *First*, *Second*, and *Third Epistles*, and the *Revelation*, which is an Apocalyptic Vision of the ultimate triumph of Christ's Kingdom.

Group II has left but one Book, the *Gospel by Matthew*. The author of this Gospel addressed his message directly to his own

²¹See *Matthew* 9:36-38; 10:1-42; 11:1; *Mark* 6:7-13; *Luke* 9:1-6. Compare also *Matthew* 11:20-30; and *Luke* 10:1-24, where the Seventy may have been sent forth under the general supervision of the Twelve.

²²See *Matthew* 16:13-20; 28:16-20; *Mark* 16:15-20; *Luke* 24:44-53; *Acts* 1:8; and in fact, most of the New Testament.

²³Most of the Books of the New Testament were written between the years 50 and 70 A. D., though the extreme dates are about 45 to 100 A. D. See the Tabulation on page XV.

fellow-countrymen. This Gospel was the only Book of the New Testament that was not written originally in the Greek Language, which was then universal over the Mediterranean World. This Book was written in the Aramaic Language, and possibly soon afterward also in the Greek. However, some think that there was an earlier original in Greek, written about 45 A.D., which was translated into the Aramaic. This debated point probably can never be settled with absolute certainty.

Group III has given to the world two very practical Books. James the Less, as he was called, was almost certainly the author of the *Epistle of James*; and Judas Thaddaeus very probably wrote the *General Epistle of Jude*.

Group IV, which contained only Judas Iscariot, of course, is not represented in the New Testament Writings.

The Apostle Paul, who may be thought of as Group V, has contributed more Books of the New Testament than any other writer. He was probably closely associated with Luke in the writing of the *Gospel by Luke*, and of *The Acts of the Apostles*, and possibly also in the writing of *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, though no one knows who wrote this Epistle. This connection with Paul, or some other association with the Apostles, is highly probable on the part of Luke, because he has declared, in the Preface to his Gospel, that he was recording the testimony of eyewitnesses. Besides these historical and expository writings of Luke, in which Paul probably had a hand, Paul himself wrote thirteen Special Letters, to individuals and to Christian communities, expounding the Plan of Salvation through the grace of God that is in Jesus Christ.

Thus it is seen that the Apostles themselves, directly or indirectly, produced practically all of the New Testament. Their Testimony may be summed up in a general way as follows. Group I has given to the world the Gospel of Power, of Love, of Consolation, and of Triumph. Group II has connected the Savior with the ancient purposes of God, which were foretold in Prophecy, and fulfilled in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Who was sent, in the fullness of time, to be the covenanted Savior and Benefactor of the world. Group III has translated saving grace into terms of everyday life and duty. Paul and Luke have linked the Gospel of Jesus Christ with the heart and the throne of God, and have spread out the grace of God through Jesus Christ before all the world as the supreme and final responsibility of all mankind.

Those Twelve Apostles, through whom the testimony to Christ

was finally made perfect, were the men in whom Jesus Christ laid the foundations of His Kingdom in the world. Having secured these leaders, the Lord Jesus took up at once the next problem of organization. That problem was concerned with the inner principles by which Christian life within His Kingdom should be defined and regulated.

CHAPTER VII

THE KINGDOM: THE CITIZENS

"Behold, the Kingdom of God is within you." *Luke 17:21.*

"For the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men." *Romans 14:17-18.*

"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house." *1. Peter 2:5.*

"Now is come salvation, and strength, and the Kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ." *Revelation 12:10.*

Christ chose the Twelve Apostles, as recounted in the previous chapter, to be the personal element with which to begin His Kingdom in the world. Having done that, Christ began almost immediately to declare the body of principles which define and govern all life within that Kingdom.

The Sermon on the Mount as the Constitution of Christ's Kingdom in the World. This body of principles, or fundamental laws, was set forth in the *Sermon on the Mount*, which may very properly be thought of as the Constitution of Christ's Kingdom in the world.

Human machinery and a constitution are the essentials of an organization. Therefore this Sermon on the Mount, which was delivered as early as occasion would allow

1. Place and Nature of This Sermon
Matthew 5:1-7:29
Luke 6:20-49

after the choosing of the Twelve Apostles, was the next logical step taken by Jesus in the organizing of His Kingdom. This work the Lord Jesus pushed forward at this time with as little interruption as possible.

The Sermon on the Mount, as a statement of fundamental law, did three things. First, it recognized that the Kingdom of Christ is a spiritual Kindom. That Kingdom is essentially a renewed spiritual life in the heart, a life that results from a living faith in the Son of God. Secondly, this Sermon defined a connection, deep in the regenerated heart, between all laws and that new spiritual life, which radiates with power, and sanctifies life itself, and all of life's relationships. Finally, this Sermon, with Divine authority, traced outward, from the hidden depths of the heart, the proper and adequate expression of that new life with which the Kingdom of Christ begins. This Sermon is, therefore, in its

broadest meaning, possibly the most comprehensive statement of the Christ-life to be found in any one place in the entire Word of God.

The purpose of this Sermon is therefore very definite. It deals primarily with the realization and expression of spiritual life.

2. Divine Purpose of This Sermon It gives not so much a condition of life, as a prescription for living. It presupposes salvation, and then tells how a saved life should be lived in order to realize itself, and to accomplish its mission in the world. This underlying purpose of the Sermon on the Mount has not always had sufficient emphasis.

Christ spoke this message to Christians. He delivered this Sermon to His own disciples, to believers who were already saved, to those who were even then already citizens of His newly organized Kingdom. Every word of this Sermon presupposed faith in Christ on the part of those to whom these words were addressed.

The Lord Jesus, in this extended discourse, defined the right and adequate outworking of a living faith in the heart. He declared how a Christian should live. He analyzed the qualities of character and conduct that should appear in the life of a citizen of His Kingdom. He set forth the right relations of such a citizen to the unsaved world. He outlined the principles of law by which the conduct of a saved man, in his personal, social, and religious life, must be governed. He described, and also prescribed, the tests by which the integrity of the Christian life of the citizen of His Kingdom must be, and will be tested.

These obligations, all of them, rest ultimately upon the unsaved man also. But the unsaved man must answer first for the supreme obligation of saving faith in Jesus Christ. With that begins, and upon that alone is built up, the more advanced obligations which Christ, in this Sermon, has laid upon the hearts of men in all ages. *First Faith*; and then its adequate expression, as outlined in this Sermon. For both men are held in definite responsibility before the searching judgments of God.

This truth of *faith first* was greatly emphasized by the circumstances under which this Sermon was delivered. The immediate occasion involved two local movements on the part of Jesus. First, He came down from the mountain where He had chosen the Twelve Apostles, to the multitude on the level place below. There He found, besides many of His own disciples, a great mixed multitude of other

3. Special Setting of This Sermon
Matthew 5:1
Luke 6:17-19

people, who had gathered from all Judea and Jerusalem on the South, and from the sea coasts of Tyre and Sidon on the North. Many of them were sick. Some had unclean spirits. All desired to hear, and to be healed. Eagerly, and possibly with great confusion, the crowd pressed upon Jesus while He was ministering to their needs.

After a time, the Lord Jesus withdrew again from the general crowd, with its noise and disorder. He went a second time apart, to a mountain not far away. To Him, in that place of retirement, came His disciples, who had also withdrawn from the general multitude in the plain below. It was there, in the quiet of the mountain side, to a select audience of those who believed in Him already, that Christ delivered this Sermon on the Mount. To those who were already Christians He addressed this message. For them He analyzed the meaning of discipleship, or of citizenship in His Kingdom. He discussed that citizenship as a life that is built upon personal faith, such a life as is ultimately the solemn obligation of all men.

This Sermon was long; but its outline was clear. The discourse falls into three main divisions, which treat the three principal topics about which the fundamental law of His Kingdom is concerned. In the first division of the Sermon, Christ dealt, in a comprehensive way, with the question of citizenship in His Kingdom. In the second division, He analyzed at great length the principles of moral and spiritual law which must govern the personal, religious, and social life of those within His Kingdom. In the third division, He set forth the tests of the Kingdom.

4. General Outline of This Sermon

The questions of the moral law, and of the tests of the Kingdom, will be considered later. The present chapter is concerned with the two aspects of citizenship in the Kingdom which Christ emphasized in the first division of this Sermon. First, in the Beatitudes, beginning with the fact that citizenship is blessedness, Christ stated, point by point, the underlying principles upon which that blessedness rests, and under which it may be attained. In giving this analysis, He stated the necessary qualities and characteristics of a citizen in His Kingdom. Then, after He had thus defined the Citizen, Christ next defined, under the two figures of *Salt* and *Light*, the right relations of the Citizen within the Kingdom to the outside unsaved world.

I. The Characteristics of the Citizens of Christ's Kingdom

Christianity in the heart is both an achievement and a working force. Salvation, as seen already in Chapter IV above, involves both an *intake* and an *outflow* of that saving grace which results from personal faith in Christ. This conception of spiritual life runs through all of Christ's thought in this discussion of citizenship in His Kingdom. First, men must believe, and receive, and become; and then, there must be a right response of their acquired life, and grace, and power. Thus only can the saved life become blessed.

That is the Divine Truth which underlies all of the Beatitudes. In speaking them, Christ began with the fact of faith and life

1. Underlying Law of Blessedness: Being and Doing in Actual Life

already in the hearts of His hearers. He considered that the life which results from faith was the beginning of blessedness. He emphasized that the unfolding blessedness of a Christian life was conditioned upon the attaining, and the doing of certain things in one's life. He reasserted, with each Beatitude, that the blessedness of life and the conditions of blessedness are united in the bonds of law. Sometimes the result is the natural effect of laws that are obvious. Always the bond is a "shall be" from the Divine Law-giver Himself. "Blessed are they that attain and do these things," says the Voice of Authority; "for the results *shall follow*."

But effective faith and life must be expressed in fulfillment of certain definite obligations, as seen in the following analysis. The

2. Grouping of the Beatitudes

Lord spoke nine Beatitudes, defining nine conditions of blessedness to be fulfilled. Those nine Beatitudes fall into three Groups. The first Group contains four Beatitudes, all of which are concerned with the development of right personal character. They deal with what a man ought to be in himself. The second Group, containing three Beatitudes, is concerned with the right relations of a man's life to his fellowmen and to his God. The third Group, which has only two Beatitudes, lays down the principles of faithfulness to the Kingdom of Christ, and to Christ the King.

Through these three Groups of the Beatitudes Christ has opened up the channels whereby a saved life may express itself into blessedness. In being, and in doing, these things which Christ has set forth as necessary, the Citizen of His Kingdom is privileged to work out, not a condition of salvation, but the

blessedness of a life that has been saved by faith in Jesus Christ. The Beatitudes will now be studied, by Groups, and separately, under the following analysis.

I. Group I: Qualities in the Citizen Relating to His Own Personal Character. The first four Beatitudes refer to what the

Four Beatitudes
Matthew 5:3-6
Luke 6:20-21,
and 6:24-25

citizen of Christ's Kingdom should be, or become, or attain, in his own personal character, in order that he may have the blessedness provided within the Kingdom. From the sincerest depths of the personal life of the individual, according to the searching analysis of this Group of Beatitudes, the renewed Christian life should have found expression in four fundamental characteristics. The first two of these four Beatitudes, as will appear in the following study, are somewhat negative in their requirements, in that they prescribe preparatory frames of mind, and attitudes of life; but the other two of this Group are decidedly positive.

The first condition of blessedness is poverty of spirit. "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven."

The expression *poor* in this statement means
1. First Beatitude: paupers, or beggars, who have nothing at Poverty of Spirit all. Spiritually, it signifies the absence of intellectual and spiritual pride. The central idea of this Beatitude is opposed to self-sufficiency.

A man must be poor in his own opinion. This requirement of life implies a recognized standard, such as may be seen in the original conception of Man, or in the Ten Commandments, or in the more exacting standards of excellence held up in Jesus Christ and by Him in His Teachings. Measuring himself by these true standards of life and conduct, a man must realize his own insufficiency, and feel a deep want of satisfaction in his own attainments. That is what *poor in spirit* means. They who thus humble themselves shall be exalted. Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.¹

They have it already. First of all, they are in a position to be exalted. Such poverty, felt deep in the soul, marks the beginning of that spiritual possession which is able to exalt one more and more. It is the opening door for Divine grace, and the gifts of spiritual life. Some one has well said, that "Lowliness is the beginning of holiness." The haughty and the self-sufficient have never been able to make the first adequate beginning in spiritual

¹On the thought of this paragraph, see *Galatians* 6:3; *Genesis* 1:26-27; *Exodus* 20:1-17; *Psalms* 15: 1-5; *Galatians* 5:16-26; and this entire Sermon on the Mount.

attainment. That is an important fact to reckon with in one's thoughts about life.

Furthermore, the gifts of God that make possible other attainments and services in life rest upon this same fundamental condition. They that would be strong must feel the need of leaning upon the Lord. Those who have attained the most have most felt the necessity of receiving their sufficient grace from the hand of the Son of God. Finally, it is true that the poor in spirit do most easily achieve the Kingdom of Heaven. They who are emptied of self are always more easily filled with the fullness of Christ.

The second condition of blessedness is a holy discontent. "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted." This

2. Second Beatitude: Mourning

means personal sorrow for the want of attainment, and world-sorrow for the fact of sin, and its wreckage in the world. There is reason to mourn for one's own poverty of soul, for his failures to measure up to the standards of true life, and for the fact, that back of all failures the cause lies somewhere in sin, which has brought degradation and defeat into the world. There is cause for tears when man beholds himself unattained, and but slowly attaining. There is occasion for little else than sad reflection, as a rule, when life's possibilities and privileges are compared with the poverty of life's attainments, and with the judgments that have fallen upon life's sinful failures. To the serious minded, the world is filled with causes for sorrow.²

But the mourning spoken of in this Beatitude is not the sorrow of despair. It is rather the sorrow of travail, out of which is born new hope, new purpose, and new resolution. Mourning, as the Christian mourns, insures comfort. Tears do mark the first stirrings of hope in the moral world. This truth is written large in the Word of God. Bitter tears were the saving grace of Peter, when he had denied his Lord. "Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of." The citizen of Christ's Kingdom finds the comfort that is provided: it is forgiveness for the past, and grace for better attainment. "Blessed are they that mourn," does not mean that the Christian's life is full of sorrow always. No. There are sorrows. But deep in his heart of hearts there is a never-failing source of comfort and joy.

The sorrows of the world have their ultimate roots somewhere

²The thought of this Beatitude is alien to the idea of an individual, or a community patting itself on the back over what it has already done. It is wiser to read Philipians 3:13-14; and with Paul to *forget*, and press forward..

in sin, which "brought death into the world, and all our woe." The man who is sensitive to the sorrow that arises from sin seeks comfort in One Who is mighty to save from sin. Such a man goes at once to the Fountain of all Comfort. This also is true. The man who has the keenest sense of the deeper sorrows of life does, as a matter of fact, enter more definitely into the consolations that arise from the mercy, and forgiveness, and salvation, that come to the world through Jesus Christ. Those who have felt the deepest needs of Christ find the greatest joy in Him. Those who have borne most the world's burdens have best known the world's mercies, and hopes, and comforts.

The third condition of blessedness is meekness. "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." Meekness is a great positive force in life, which tends to lay hold

3. Third Beatitude:
Meekness, a Quality
of Action

of the earth. Meekness was never an abstract, unrelated, passive quality in anybody or anything. Pious faces and folded hands are not even a sign of meekness. Meekness is always a quality of action, or of positive attitude in life. In its deepest sense, meekness is concerned with the character of one's attitude, and the spirit of one's responses, toward God. That first. After that, meekness is concerned with one's attitudes and responses toward those human agencies, and those natural laws, through which God touches an individual life.

When God touches a life, in His direct dealings, the meek bow lovingly to His authority, whether the touch be that of grace, instruction, or chastisement. The meek are ready to learn from Him, and to respond with grace, patience, and profit. Meekness is constructive effort. It seeks to know God, and to exalt Him. It is godliness with contentment, which is great gain.

Meekness gives therefore a spiritual possession to all things. The man who exalts himself never really possesses anything; for he can never be satisfied with anything. Such a man, like Macbeth, may steal a crown, but he can never find a sense of security in wearing the crown. But the man who exalts the Lord shall not want any good thing.

Furthermore, meekness means a right attitude toward men. When men are willfully wrong, the meek will respond with grace and patience, but never with indifference. Meekness is gentle and charitable; but it is also morally honest. It fears not, nor hesitates, to take hold of personal and social evils. When God's hand touches life, indirectly, through human agencies, the meek bow reverently before Him. But when He calls for service, the

meekest are the most ready to buckle on the armour of the Lord. In all cases, the attitude of confident thanksgiving and humble responsiveness to God, and of gentleness and moral firmness in dealing with men, does actually inherit the world that lies between Man and God, and between Man and Man.

Finally, meekness means a right attitude toward God as He has asserted Himself in those natural laws by which He has so kindly conditioned human welfare. The meek are willing to learn His ways, to bow before the majesty of His laws, and reverently to seek co-operation with Him. That is the primary condition of inheriting even the physical world.

The original thought of God was that Man should possess the world by subduing it. Men must learn God's ways, and work according to His laws. All science, all art, all invention, all progress and achievements through applied power, have the same underlying secret. Some person has somewhere learned the ways of God, Whose secrets are with them that fear Him. It is far more a matter of natural law, than of special providence, that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called *according to His purpose*." Meekness seeks to line up with God; and it has what it asks for, for it does not ask amiss.³

From this point of view, it seems to be a fact, that the possession of the world (so far as it is yet possessed) is largely due to this particular Christian grace of meekness, and to what it has inspired in the hearts of men. Pagan superstitions guess at law and life, and keep their peoples weighed down with ignorance and error. Christian civilization reverently recognizes God, and seeks to know and to follow His laws. Conquest and possession of the earth have been commensurate with knowledge and constructive effort, both of which, as effective forces in the world, have belonged mainly to Christian civilization and have sprung from the spirit of meekness in the hearts of men.⁴

Meekness is the necessary first step in any positive constructive enterprise. It is an attitude toward God, and the spirit in which

³See *Genesis* 1:28; *Psalms* 25:14; *Romans* 8:28; *Matthew* 6:31-33; *James* 4:3; *Matthew* 21:21-22; *Deuteronomy* 5:29; and *I. John* 3:22-23.

⁴This suggestion should challenge attention. If in the matter of production, transportation, and distribution, in all parts of the world, the natural laws and forces which God has put in this world were learned, and applied, and utilized, such a catastrophe as a famine would probably be impossible. And if the whole Divine Machinery of Nature, thus fully developed, were under the administration of a thoroughly Christianized operation and supervision, there would be no suffering allowed, even if famine conditions should develop in any locality. China has food, but no transportation system. The world suffers because it has not bowed before the ways of God. It has neither developed, nor consecrated the natural blessings which He has given.

things may be done. Christ, with Divine wisdom, considered meekness to be the first great positive factor in the citizenship of His Kingdom in the world. Upon that factor depends the success of all other positive factors in Christian endeavor. Meekness itself is a fruit of the Spirit;⁵ and true inheritance, such as results from meekness, is a spiritual fact. The spirit of meekness does give an inheritance even in things which cannot be attained in any other way.

There is a spiritual inheritance that does not at all depend upon title possession. The blessedness of enjoyment, for example, was never limited by the surveyor's chain. The peasant may really possess that on which the landlord pays the taxes. This also is true. Christ Himself was meek and lowly. He had not where to lay His head. Yet the fullness of the world was His at His command. In this deeper sense, the resources of God are at the command of him who goes forward in life with a right attitude toward God.

Meekness, then, is reverence, humility, obedience, correct self-appraisal, forbearance, and co-operation with divine law and guidance in life. This spiritual quality does actually multiply one's powers over material things. It also gives the advantages of position and power in the social and spiritual spheres of life. It places one in the right attitude to inherit all things. "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." These were not idle words, when they were spoken by Christ.

The fourth condition of blessedness is a hungering and thirsting after righteousness. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."

4. Fourth Beatitude: Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness

Hunger and thirst are expressive of basic, primary needs of life. This fact suggests the fitness of Christianity for the lowest, and the need of Christ in the foundations of all life. These cravings of life are instinctive, ingrained, and compelling. This truth suggests that man's deepest need is for righteousness, and that his spiritual nature, which is the true self, cannot be satisfied apart from the attainment of righteousness. This deep felt-need of the soul must be satisfied. Blessedness depends upon it. That is the way the citizen of Christ's Kingdom feels, and must feel. "I shall be satisfied," he sings in praise of his King, "when I shall awake in Thy likeness."

But there is another truth in this Beatitude. This intense longing, this compelling felt-need, is for *the Righteousness*, as the

⁵See *Galatians* 5:22-23.

text reads. This condition of blessedness seeks the whole righteousness, complete in all its fullness, as related both to God and to man, a righteousness that permeates and sanctifies the whole heart and life. Nothing else can fully satisfy the regenerated spirit of man. When a man thus makes righteousness the supreme end of his life, several things will follow.

Such a man will at once seek a standard of righteousness that will satisfy this demand of life. He will make the Law of the Lord his meditation day and night. He will put forth all of his powers to attain that standard which he finds in the Word of God. He will avail himself of all the helps that are offered in and through the Kingdom of Christ, which is outwardly represented in the ministering Church. He will be a man of prayer, and of spiritual meditation. He will rightly evaluate his own moral and spirit attainments, and will not exalt himself too high in his own opinion. He will seek the Lord while He may be found, and call upon Him while He is near.

The man who thus follows after righteousness will see, more and more, that complete satisfaction is not in himself, but in Jesus Christ the Righteous. Such a man will soon learn this deeper law of the Kingdom. It is the craving for righteousness, far more than his own personal attainments therein, that brings satisfaction: for the craving leads the soul to Christ. He will also learn that the realization will be commensurate with the power of that craving as a compelling felt-need in his own life. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled,"—filled with the fullness of Christ.

2. *Group II: Qualities in the Citizen Bearing upon His Relations to God and to Men.* The second Group of conditions upon which rests the blessedness of life defines those qualities in the citizen of Christ's Kingdom which must be exemplified in the relations of that citizen to God and to Men.

Three Beatitudes
Matthew 5:7-9
Luke 6:26

There are three such relationships considered in this Group; and each of them would seem to be fundamental in a life of blessedness. The conditions in each case are high and holy.

The first relationship defined in this Group is that which exists between the citizen himself and any other man. This relationship calls for the exercise of mercy between man and man. The second relationship emphasized is that between the citizen and God, wherein purity of heart is an essential. The third relationship here discussed involves the responsibility which every citizen of the Kingdom has, as a peacemaker, to foster and promote

right relations between other men. These relationships, with their respective obligations upon the citizen of the Kingdom, will be seen in the next three of the Beatitudes.

The fifth condition of blessedness is the exercise of mercy. "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." In all

of his relations with his fellowmen, the
1. Fifth Beatitude: citizen of Christ's Kingdom must show the
Showing Mercy spirit of mercy. Thus only can he be Christ-like, or Christian. That he must do: for the man without mercy cannot hope to obtain mercy. "And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors," is the only petition to which is added a condition in the Lord's Prayer; and this petition alone the Lord Himself emphasized by comment, when the Prayer was given. "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" That is an ancient standard; but the Lord's conditions of life, and of blessedness in life, have never changed.⁶

Mercy shown is the condition and the guarantee of mercy received. Pity expressed in active kindness to the destitute, and in forgiveness to the erring, is not without recompense. Men are usually careful and gracious to repay. God never forgets. The effective element in mercy is this. He who thoughtfully exercises that grace soon comes to feel his own deeper need of receiving mercy himself. This consciousness gives him the attitude of a suppliant, and opens wide the channels of the spirit for a large receiving of that with which God always, and men as a rule, are pleased to compensate the merciful.

Thus mercy from man to man is blessed four-fold. It blesses the giver in giving, the receiver in receiving, the giver in receiving, and the receiver in giving. Then to this four-fold blessing, God Himself adds a blessing of Divine mercy to the man who gives mercy, and also to the man who repays mercy. The first great condition of blessedness in the relations of man to man is the Christ-like readiness to show mercy to one's fellowmen.

The sixth condition of blessedness is purity of heart. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." The citizen of

Christ's Kingdom, who must know God, has
2. Sixth Beatitude: the privilege of knowing Him aright, and
Purity of Heart the blessedness of Knowing Him with sympathetic understanding. The true citizen also worships God more

⁶See *Matthew* 18:23-35; 6:12, 14, 15; and the discussion of these passages in their proper places in this book; and *Micah* 6:8.

perfectly, because he sees Him more perfectly as an Object of Worship. Such a vision and knowledge of God is reserved for those whose hearts are pure. The impure see Him not at all; or, at best, see Him very imperfectly.

To see God, there must be purity in the heart. The affections must be pure: for from them spring thoughts, words, and actions, that help, or else hinder, spiritual vision. There must be in the heart a supreme love for truth and right, that will bend all of the energies of life steadfastly toward God and righteousness. From a pure heart alone can come those finer impulses of life which so greatly inspire the imagination, and help the eye of the spirit to look upon Him Who is invisible.

Thus purity of heart conditions the vision of God. It also tends to produce a vision of Him. Moral purity clarifies the spiritual vision, and also clears the moral atmosphere through which God is seen. Purity gives spiritual sympathy with God, and makes one more watchful as to when, and where, and how God may be seen. Purity turns, with eager eyes, toward God. It seems to draw one nearer to God. It makes one more sensitive to the presence of God. It enables one more readily to recognize God when He is near. It earnestly seeks to look upon Him Who is perfect. As a result of all these facts and conditions, to the pure in heart God is revealed. They have that satisfaction, and that blessedness for which all men have always longed.

The seventh condition of blessedness is the promotion of peace. "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." God is the God of Peace. Christ is the Prince of Peace. The Gospel was heralded with a song of Peace on Earth.

3. Seventh Beatitude: Promotion of Peace

The citizen of Christ's Kingdom must be a maker of peace, if he would be recognized in the world as a child of God.

This obligation is far-reaching, and must be met in a number of ways. The citizen of Christ's Kingdom must actively exert a peaceful self among men. He must seek to reconcile those who are not at peace among themselves. He must promote such moral standards, and such outward conditions, social, economical, and other, as will foster right relations between man and man at all times. Most quarrels, it will be remembered, arise out of personal immorality, social envy, or economic injustice. The citizen of the Kingdom must promote right relations among men in a world at its best. The doing of this thing is God-like in nature and purpose, and is therefore essentially Christian.

Those who thus promote peace shall be called the *sons of God*, for that is the correct translation of this passage. The deepest cry of the soul is toward the Father. The highest privilege of spiritual life is the consciousness of sonship to God. This blessedness is reserved, in its vital meaning, for the Christian alone, who has received the special right to this privilege because of his faith in Christ.⁷ There should be no error in thought at this point. Promoting peace does not make men sons of God. The seventh Beatitude suggests nothing of that kind. Faith in Christ alone can bring about that result. But the promotion of peace does cause one's sonship to God to be recognized.

Christians are sons of God already, as a result of faith in Christ; but the blessedness of that sonship is realized, both within the heart and as a recognition from others, through the fulfillment of this condition. The resulting consciousness is inevitable, as is also the recognition. The act of making peace is God-like in character. It is also social. It stimulates at least two persons other than the peacemaker himself. The truth is obvious to both alike. Their inevitable comment brings certain recognition. This truth, and the full recognition of it, is as the consummation of the Christian life. Men are thereby known to be the sons of God.

3. *Group III: Qualities of Fidelity in the Citizen toward Truth and toward Christ.* In the third Group there are only two

Two Beatitudes
Matthew 5:10-12
Luke 6:22

Beatitudes. These are concerned with the requirements of loyalty on the part of the citizen of the Kingdom. Fidelity is the keynote of these last two of the Beatitudes. The one enjoins fidelity to the principles of truth and right, for which the Kingdom stands. The other calls for fidelity to Christ Himself, Who is Lord, and King, and Savior.

This double loyalty is the final testing of qualifications in the citizen of the Kingdom. There are exhibited, in this loyalty and through it, as from the depths of the soul, the purposes and the motives from which spring the life and conduct of the man of God. The citizen of the Kingdom, whatever the price, must be faithful to truth, and faithful to Christ. The final blessedness of citizenship depends upon this loyalty: for the results of all other conditions rest at last upon the integrity of the heart in fulfilling these two conditions.

The eighth condition of blessedness is fidelity to Truth. "Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness"

⁷See this truth as stated in *John* 1:12.

sake: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." Righteousness comes at a price. There is no escaping payment, if one expects

1. Eighth Beatitude: Fidelity to Truth

to attain the Kingdom of Heaven. Righteousness and Truth are great disturbers of the world. The latter, with compelling authority, challenges all error. The former, of necessity, antagonizes all evil. It has always done so, since the original enmity was set between the Seed of the Woman and the Serpent in the Garden. Good and Evil, Saving Grace and Death, struggle a thousand ways for the souls of men.

Conflict and persecution are inevitable. Nothing but the whole armor of God can suffice. The question for the citizen of the Kingdom is that of fidelity to the principles of truth, and justice, and righteousness. For them the Kingdom stands. To surrender them, or even to compromise them, is to surrender the Kingdom itself as a living principle in the heart.

Fidelity alone secures the title of citizenship. They that endure to the end shall be saved. This aspect of the blessedness provided within the Kingdom spans the whole of life, that which now is, and that which is to come. It is one life, and one Kingdom. Persecution of those within such an eternal Kingdom cannot be more than an incident in the triumph of the faithful. Perfect endurance for righteousness' sake, if such perfection were possible, would tend to secure the gifts of the Kingdom as a matter of justice.

But possession comes to the faithful in many ways. Clear-sighted recognition of God's law brings the Kingdom near to their hearts and life.⁸ A supreme love for truth and right, such as will surrender all else first, promotes harmony with Christ the King, and thus enables one more completely and sympathetically to possess the Kingdom. The fact of possession first asserts itself in poverty of spirit. The triumph of possession is attained through fidelity to truth and right, in a life that intentionally honors Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and as a personal Savior. There is no other way to possess the Kingdom of Heaven. God is Spirit, and Light or Truth, and Love; and His Kingdom in the heart of man must faithfully embody these principles.

The ninth condition of blessedness is fidelity to Jesus Christ Himself, or to truth for sake of honoring Him. "Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in Heaven:

⁸Compare Mark 12:34.

for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

Carefully notice these words of the Son of God. "Blessed are

ye (when ye do all, and endure all)
 2. Ninth Beatitude: *for My sake.*" The ultimate factor in

Fidelity to Christ
 and to His Honor all Christian citizenship is the faithful attach-

ment of the soul to Jesus Christ. The deepest motive in a Christian life is the desire to honor and exalt Christ as Lord, and Savior, and King. That is the most indispensable motive: it should be the most compelling. When that motive is effective in the heart, the Kingdom of Heaven is there already. But the life that exemplifies these essential conditions must be genuine in itself, and willing always to endure whatever is necessary for the honor of Christ.

When Christ thus brought Himself personally before His own disciples, He addressed them, for the first time in the Beatitudes, in the *second person*. "Blessed are ye," He said to them. Knowing what their discipleship meant, Jesus spoke thus directly and affectionately, as if to draw His disciples nearer to Himself, and to bring home to their hearts the blessed assurance of a great reward in Heaven. "That reward," He said, in effect, "is in My hands, and so cannot fail. Be ye faithful to Me, and evil shall do you no lasting harm."

Reproach from others does no violence when one's conscience is approved of God. Persecution cannot touch the life that is hid with Christ in God. Evil speaking is harmless when it can only try to falsify a life that is honoring the Son of God. Endurance is triumph, if the purpose and motive of life is to honor Jesus Christ. That, done in sincerity and in truth, is the Kingdom of Heaven in the heart of man. The rewards of the Kingdom cannot fail: for the life, in time, is linked with eternity.

The present privilege of the Christian is definitely set forth in this Beatitude. Christ has exhorted the citizens of His Kingdom to "rejoice, and be exceeding glad." Present assurance in things that cannot fail ought to be a never failing source of joy in life. It has always been so with the children of God. Christ had no fear in appealing to history on this occasion for re-assuring evidence in support of this truth. God has always cared for His own. The Prophets, who have endured affliction for God and truth, have never failed of their reward. God has always had His "better things" for those who have lived with a purpose to honor Him and to glorify His Son. Happy is the man who reads history deep enough to see the evidences of God's triumphant care!

But more is meant here than mere assurance. In speaking of *exceeding gladness*, Christ pointed to the deeper stirrings of the heart, to a mighty emotional impulse for action. Those words are as a battle cry from the King Himself, for positive, aggressive attacks to be made upon the Kingdom of Darkness and Death. Thus the Beatitudes, in this final suggestion, pointed directly forward to the responsibilities of citizenship which are set forth in the next section of the Sermon on the Mount.

II. The Relations of the Citizens of the Kingdom to the Outside World

Up to this point in the Sermon on the Mount, Christ had been talking about the blessedness of citizenship within His Kingdom, and of the conditions under which that blessedness might be attained. The Lord turned, in the next section of this Sermon, to the responsibilities of His Kingdom as it has existed for all time in the world. This progress in His thought was in keeping with His conception of a saved life, as already analyzed above in Chapter IV: for this turn, in its larger outlines, was from the receiving to the responsive side of His Kingdom and its citizenship. In a few words, He defined the fundamental obligations that rest upon the citizens of His Kingdom in their relations with the non-believing, unsaved world outside of His Kingdom.

What are those relations? And what are those obligations? Christ analyzed this aspect of Citizenship under two simple figures of speech. The first of those figures represented the Christian as "the salt of the earth." The other represented him as "the light of the world." In these two simple figures, Christ has emphasized the two fundamental relations of His disciples to the unsaved world that lies in sin and death, and has pointed out the supreme obligations that inhere in those relations.

I. *The First Obligation of the Kingdom toward the World.*
The Lord's first figure was this. "Ye are the salt of the earth."

Salt of the Earth
Matthew 5:13
Cf. Mark 9:50
Luke 14:34-35

What did that mean? Jesus Christ never misused language. His meaning in this figure must have turned upon the one essential function of salt, which is to *preserve*, to *keep fit*. Salt does not transform the thing salted, causing it to become salt. Since that is true, this figure obviously

cannot refer to the responsibility of the citizens of Christ's Kingdom to propagate that Kingdom, and to Christianize the unsaved. That is a responsibility of the Kingdom; but that is the meaning of the second figure, and not of the first.

Salt *preserves* and *keeps fit*, the thing that is salted. In that essential sense, Christ has used the figure of salt in other connections. In that sense He has used the figure here, signifying the first basic relation and obligation of His Kingdom and its citizens to the outside unsaved world. Under this figure of Salt, which the Lord has used with exactness of meaning, He has represented His Kingdom as standing for the accomplishment of two results in the world.

First, the Kingdom of Christ is a *preserving force* in the world. The influences of that Kingdom deter the disintegrating forces of

the unregenerated elements of society, and keep them from spoiling all life in the world. This is true in reference to all the economical, social, intellectual, moral, and spiritual interests of the world. There is much big-

oted criticism on this point rampant in the world to-day. But the truth stands unshaken. Without the seasoning influences of the Kingdom of Christ in the hearts of men, the world would not long remain a fit place in which to live.

The "savour" of this salt is very effective. The ideals and graces of Christ's Kingdom have permeated all the agencies, and organizations, and governments of the world that have dedicated themselves as ministering servants to the welfare of men. There are no exceptions to this truth. The ignorant and the blind alone fail to recognize it. The world of the past, and the world that now is, unite in proving that the Kingdom of God in the world is the one preserving force of the world.

The salt does preserve. But there is where responsibility begins. The Kingdom of Christ must maintain its power, if it would preserve the moral fitness of the world. Individual citizens everywhere and always must exemplify the highest and purest Christian life. Salt that has lost its savour is fit only to be cast out, and to be trodden under the feet of men. That is the obligation, with its solemn warning, which this meaning of this figure lays upon the citizenship of Christ's Kingdom in the present world.

Secondly, the Kingdom of Christ is the *preserving element* of the world. The figure of salt, as viewed in this sense, lays a heavy responsibility upon the outside world, as well as upon the

1. The Kingdom as
Salt Preserves the
World from Moral
Decay

citizens of the Kingdom. That responsibility was here spoken to the world with the solemn emphasis of an overhanging judgment. The wages of sin is death. When sin

2. The Kingdom as Salt Preserves the World from Divine Judgment first came into the world, the doom of the world was due. But that divine judgment pronounced upon sin, in its summary execution at least, has been suspended for a time.

Why so? This figure of salt gives an answer.

The answer is this. God has provided a plan of redemption, a way of life and hope. That redemption is administered through the Kingdom of Christ in the world. The purposes of God, past, present, and future, are bound up with that Kingdom of Christ. That Kingdom, past, present, and future, is in the world, like salt, preserving the very existence of the world until the purposes of God be accomplished. The world stands to-day only because God's people are in it, saved and to be saved, and because purposes of Divine love, and mercy, and glory, must be accomplished.

Again, the "savour" of the salt is effective. That is the answer. Serious reflection, in its last analysis, can scarcely conceive of any other reason for suspending that divine judgment which was due upon the world when Man had first sinned. But God has waited, is waiting, and will wait, in order that the gracious work of His Kingdom may be accomplished. But will He wait forever? No. Such is not to be expected. His people have not misread the meaning of His Word. The doors of grace will not remain open forever. When may they close? That element of uncertainty should challenge the active concern alike of men and of nations: for the destiny of men and institutions is bound up with the accomplishment of God's purposes in the earth.

2. The Second Obligation of the Kingdom toward the World.
The Lord's second defining figure was, "Ye are the light of the world." In the former figure of *salt*, Christ

Light of the World emphasized what the Christian *must be*, in
Matthew 5:14-16 order that the Kingdom of Christ may accomplish its purpose and mission in the world. In this figure of *light*, Christ showed what the citizen of His Kingdom *must do*. Such citizen is the light of the world, and he must enlighten the world with that truth, and life, and grace, which he has received from Jesus Christ as a personal Savior. In Christ there is light and life; and through the saved the life-giving Light must shine.

The primary obligation of the saved is to help save. For that

purpose, in part, the Kingdom of Christ as an institution was organized. The citizens of that Kingdom are "the light of the world." In this defining figure, Christ has emphasized a privilege, a duty, a condition, and a radius, for the shining light of every Christian life. These points of personal responsibility will now be analyzed in regular order.

There is a privilege in allowing the Christian light to shine. "Ye are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. . . . Even so let your light shine." It

1. Privilege of the Light to Shine is in the nature of light to shine: hence shining is as a privilege of natural functioning which the light enjoys. A light that is unhindered will shine. A glowing city set on a hill cannot be hid. It is so with the Christian life. When right lived, and when unhindered by sin, the light of saving grace in the heart will shine, with gracious influence, upon the surrounding world.

The purpose of light is to shine. Placing a candle under a bushel renders the candle useless, because that hindrance contradicts the nature and function of light. So it is with anything that hinders the natural work of grace in the heart and life. When the light is hindered from shining, the nature of the saved life is contradicted, and the purposes of God are thwarted. The Kingdom was established, and men are saved, in order that the light of life may shine into a dark and sinful world.

Grace and truth in life fulfill their natural function through communication. That is a law of life and service within the Kingdom of Christ.⁹ Thus the natural happiness of spiritual life is attainable only when life's blessedness has been radiated to others. That which has been freely received cannot be selfishly enjoyed. The highest privilege of the Christian life is that of reflecting the Light of Christ upon a world of darkness and spiritual death.

There is a duty that the Christian light should shine. "Even so let your light shine." That exhortation transforms the privilege of shining into an obligation, which rests upon every Christian in whom is the light of life. The candle, if lighted, *has to shine*.

2. Duty of the Light to Shine Back of the effect, there is a compelling natural law. Unless contradicted by willful obstruction, the light must shine, and will shine. Again, to shine is to dispel darkness. These are the compelling laws of the candle: the necessity of shining, and the dispelling of darkness.

⁹See Galatians 6:6.

Similar laws of the spirit rest upon the Christian life. The Light of the world must shine from the lives of men. It must neither be hindered by indifference and unconcern, nor be contradicted by sin. The Light of Life must dispel moral and spiritual darkness in the world. The grace received from Christ must shine by communication. His truth and His saving power must be revealed, and made effective in their influence upon others. That is what Christ meant when He said, "Even so let your light shine."

This obligation of citizenship in the Kingdom is both definite and compelling. The blessedness of salvation through Jesus Christ must be extended. Those who have received knowledge of the Way of Life must give that knowledge to others, both by example and by direct instruction, and through the larger organized work of the Kingdom. Those who have received the love of God must reflect that love. Those who would pray must also work. Those who would live must help others also to live.

The very nature, and privilege, and duty of saving grace is to help save, and bless the whole round world. That obligation rests upon the saved individual, and also upon the organized Kingdom of Christ, which is His Church. The light that is must shine, so that the unsaved and unblessed may see the Way of Life, and come with a living faith to glorify God the Father, and His Son Jesus Christ.

There are conditions under which the light may shine. "So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works."

3. Conditions under Which the Light May Shine

The light of life does not shine by accident. Good works, and those rightly seen, are the conditions under which the light of life may shine. That light, as commonly understood, radiates through good works that honor God. That is true, if only the whole truth is taken into account. Good works alone are not sufficient. Those good works must be so wrought as to honor God, and to lead others to honor Him and His Son Jesus Christ.

First of all, the life itself must be pure and good. The pure in heart alone may see God; and the righteous alone can reveal and commend Him to others. Still further, there must be good *works*. Neither pious passivity, nor abstract truth, nor even a sound philosophy of faith much commend the Savior to the unsaved. That requires concrete achievements of grace, tangible good works, the personal touch of a redeemed soul, the living light that shines. The truth of life becomes compelling when it is

translated into enduring faith, and transfiguring love, and Christ-like service. Through such results the light of life must shine.

But that is not all. Christ meant also that the good works must be *seen aright*. The light of life must so shine as to enable men to see and understand the nature and the source of the good works. The Christian life, which must express itself in good works, must also be seen to have its ultimate sources in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The evidences of a living personal faith must also be present. Even the cup of cold water, if it be effective, must show that it is given in the Name of Christ.

When the light of life fails to reveal this deeper connection with Christ, all good works are at once discounted. They would then tend ultimately to be void; because they fail, for want of commending vital faith in the Son of God, to lead to the glory of the Father in Heaven. The light that shines must show to the unsaved world that the good works of the Christian spring from a living faith in Christ. The Christian life itself must be made attractive and desirable. At the same time, the ultimate condition of faith in Christ, Whose grace is reflected in that desirable life, must also be held forth before the world. In this way may the good works of life lead men to glorify the Father in Heaven.

Finally, there is a radius for the light that shines. This truth is emphasized throughout the entire passage. How far should the light shine? The answer to this question measures the full responsibility of the disciple of Christ toward the unsaved world. That answer inheres in the *universal terms* used by Christ in this discourse.

4. Radius within Which the Light Should Shine

Christ said, "Ye are the light of the world." In that language there is no limit. The radius of the light reaches to the ends of the earth. He said further, "Let your light so shine before men." Again, there is no limit. His words, "before men," may mean, with equal emphasis and inescapable responsibility, the parent, the child, or the servant in the home, the next-door neighbor, the social aristocrat, the down-and-outs, the neglected child in the slums, the misguided pagan, or the benighted heathen in far-off lands.

Christ, in saying that men must "see your good works," again fixed no limits, and suggested none. Ridiculous, pathetic, even tragic at times, have been the constructions which men have put upon their responsibilities for good works. There really is a limit, a minimum limit. Good works must go at least far enough to be *seen* and *felt*, and that with convincing power to lead men

to Christ. On the maximum side, however, the citizen of Christ's Kingdom must always think, and feel, and act, in terms of world units. Even then, at his best, he cannot exhaust his responsibility for good works to be seen of men.

Limitless also is the motive and purpose which Christ gave for letting the light shine. The end of it all is to lead men to glorify God. That end will be fully accomplished only when the world is brought, through faith, into the Kingdom of Christ, and when men everywhere, rejoicing in newness of life, consistently reflect from their own lives the nature, and law, and love, and purposes of God in the world. The end and purpose and motive of a shining life are practically infinite. The radius of the Christian light is without limits.

Thus the Lord Jesus analyzed the life of blessedness within His Kingdom, and the relations of that Kingdom to the outside world, and in doing this He also analyzed the characteristics and responsibilities of citizenship in His Kingdom. The whole structure of His analysis was built upon saving faith in the hearts of those who heard Him.

The blessedness of that citizenship the Lord defined in terms of the Beatitudes. The first four points of that blessedness are conditioned upon what the citizens should *be*, and should become, within themselves. The next three points are conditioned upon the proper and adequate relations of the citizens to God and to men. The two final points, which give strength to all the others, are conditioned upon a double expression of fidelity, fidelity to truth and right, and fidelity to Christ. The life-structure that is blessed rises upon a foundation of faith, and stands strong in a faith that is tested.

The blessedness of Christianity results from being, and doing, and enduring. That is, the blessedness of citizenship in Christ's Kingdom comes from the expression, in some form, of the new life with which that citizenship began. Life is dynamic, not static; and expression of it is a necessity.

The same general truth has appeared in the Lord's analysis of the relations and responsibilities of the citizens of His Kingdom to the outside unsaved world. The two figures which Christ used to define those relations and duties were seen to emphasize what the Christian *must be*, and what he *must do*. The salt in a saved life must have its savour. Christian life must be genuine. The light of life must shine unhindered. Saving grace must radiate, actively, aggressively, and with a high and holy purpose to honor God, and His Son Jesus Christ.

Citizenship in the Kingdom of Christ may be summed up in a few words. It begins with saving faith in Jesus Christ, and the new life resulting from such faith. It unfolds, through meeting certain responsibilities of the Kingdom, into a life of blessedness. It is inspired by the supreme motive of bringing the whole world to a saving faith in the Son of God. Citizenship, as analyzed in this chapter, includes even more than is suggested in the following three-fold arrangement of ideas:

DISCIPLESHIP	BEATITUDES	SALT AND LIGHT
NEW BIRTH	CHARACTER	SERVICE
FAITH	LOVE	WORKS
GOD'S LOVE	GOD'S GRACE	GOD'S GLORY
LIFE	POWER	MOTIVE
REVELATION	REALIZATION	INSPIRATION
LIFE RECEIVED	LIFE LIVED	LIFE DEDICATED
SALVATION	BLESSEDNESS	MISSIONS
JOHN 3:16	1. TIMOTHY 4:16	MATTHEW 28:18-20

CHAPTER VIII

THE KINGDOM: THE SOCIAL LAWS

"Honor thy father and thy mother . . . Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. Thou shalt not covet . . ." *Exodus 20:12-17.*

"Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of the people, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: I am the Lord." *Leviticus 19:18; Luke 10:27.*

"We should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." *Romans 7:6.*

"All unrighteousness is sin." *1. John 5:17.*

"We ought to obey God rather than men." *Acts 5:29.*

"O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear Me, and keep all My Commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!" *Deuteronomy 5:29.*

Two stages in the process of organizing the Kingdom of Christ have already been accomplished. The Twelve Apostles, as an official foundation of the Kingdom, have been chosen. A study of them was made in Chapter VI. The characteristics and responsibilities of citizenship in the Kingdom have also been set forth, as analyzed above in Chapter VII.

In both of the previous stages of this organizing work, it will be observed, Christ was defining His Kingdom by setting it off, point by point, as respects character and function, from the unregenerated world outside the Kingdom. He was drawing the boundary line of the Kingdom, separating it from the world. From this point forward Christ was concerned with internal organization. He began at once to state the moral and spiritual laws by which life within the Kingdom shall be regulated. The laws which He stated are the true standards of Christian life, and therefore of all true and worthy life in the world: for the first obligation of every man is to become a Christian; and the second is to live these standards of Christian life. In this important sense, the words of Christ in this connection reach beyond the limits of His Kingdom: for their is no appeal from the above universal obligations.

Christ's Conception of the Nature and the Function of Law. Christ's broad and fundamental conception of Law may be fully understood and appreciated only when Law is looked at from His exalted point of view. Christ always regarded the Kingdom

of Heaven as a spiritual kingdom, having two visible forms of expression in the world: the institutional, which is the Christian

God's Thought for the Best Life Church; and the individual, which is the out-working of a new life and a new love in the heart of the Child of God.

This Kingdom of Heaven, which rises from within into present and eternal blessedness, represents the best possible life in the world. This is true both for the individual, and for society as a whole. Law is therefore, as rightly conceived in the mind of Christ, the organized thought of God respecting the adequate expression of that best possible life. On its restraining side, Law is Divine Love, warning men against the dangers of living below their best privileges. On its positive side, Law is also Divine Love, showing men how constructively to build new life and new love into permanent blessedness.

Christ held firmly to that conception of the Law of God. Therefore, in His analysis of the legal channels through which that best possible life should realize itself, Christ

2. Christ's Method of Treating Law constantly kept three things in mind. First, He traced obedience and behavior upward, as rising out of the secret fountains of life and love in the heart: for law is observed first in the heart, and then in the outward conduct. Second, Christ never offered a compromise with evil: hence His Laws are the laws of a perfect life. Third, He taught in His Laws how to handle life for the best results; and all that He taught is undeniably for the best. He taught men how to treat life, what to put into life, what to keep out of life, and what to do with life, in order that they might get the most out of life.

"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." That truth lies at the basis of Christ's high and holy thoughts about Law. Love and action and judgment are three phases of the same thing: for both present well-being and eternal happiness, in the last analysis, rest upon the same foundations of faith, and love, and righteousness. The laws of life must be morally perfect, and consistent. Obedience to them must be inspired from within, by a regenerated heart that loves God, and Man, and truth and purity, and goodness, and righteousness, supremely. The outward expression of moral law within the heart must be wrought into a life-structure that is

3. Life an Issue of the Heart
Proverbs 4:23

thoroughly consistent. Love within, and outward action are alike; and they must alike be made thoroughly Christian.

Such was the Lord's conception of Moral Law. God's requirements define the necessary conditions of attaining the best that is possible in life. Christ always looked at Law, and its imperatives, from that point of view. This fact He illustrated in all of His interpretations of the Laws of God. The truth of this statement will appear in Christ's emphasis upon the Laws of His Kingdom, which will be analyzed in this, and the next two chapters.

I. The Laws of Law Itself

Christ, in the Sermon on the Mount, began His treatment of Law with a statement of the Laws of Law itself, as the Law is related to His Kingdom. This statement was of great importance at the time in which this Sermon was spoken. Christ, through His organized Kingdom, was inaugurating a New Order of Divine administration in the organized spiritual life of the world. Under the Old Testament Dispensation, the visible Kingdom of God was national in form. It was limited to the geographical outlines of the Jewish People, and to the proselytes to their religion. The new Kingdom of Christ in the world was appointed to be distinctly spiritual and universal.

The two Orders of spiritual administration had many differences, one of which involved the question of the Law of the New Order of Christ's Kingdom. The Old Order had a Ceremonial Law, and also a Moral Law, both of which were binding in their obligations. Under the New Order, the Ceremonial Law was abolished, because it was fulfilled in the Person and work of Jesus Christ. That truth the Early Church was ready to accept.

But what, under the New Order, was to be the status of the Moral Law of the Old Order? Was that Moral Law to stand as an obligation upon life in the universal Kingdom of Christ? If so, what were to be the true relations of the Moral Law to the Kingdom of Christ? Authoritative definition was necessary: and that Christ gave in this Sermon on the Mount. He stated very clearly that the ancient Moral Law, as given to Moses and the Prophets should stand unchanged in His Kingdom, except that the Moral Law should henceforth have a deeper, more spiritual, and more compelling significance in human life. Christ made the ancient Moral Law, as given by Moses, more compre-

hensive in its application to life, and more binding upon life, than it had ever been in all previous history.

To avoid misunderstanding, Christ spoke at great length, and very clearly, on this question. He presented the truth from three points of view. As seen in the following statements, He defined the relations that shall always exist between the Moral Law of God and the Kingdom of Christ in the world.

1. The Relation of the Kingdom of Christ to the Ancient Moral Law. In His first statement, Christ declared that His Kingdom stands for the fulfilling of the Moral Law a Perpetual Obligation in Christ's Kingdom Matthew 5:17-18 ancient Moral Law, in its fullest sense, as handed down from Moses. Christ's own mission in the world was not to destroy the Law and the Prophets. Instead of that, Christ was appointed to fulfill the standard of life which was insisted upon by the full requirements of God's Law. This vicarious fulfillment of all Law, as a summation of blessedness in Himself, and as a Royal Example to His People, was a necessary part of Christ's mission as the Savior of the world.

But Christ emphasized another truth on this occasion. He insisted that the full measure of the established Moral Law of the world, as taught by Moses and the Prophets, was a perpetual obligation upon the lives of men. "Till Heaven and earth pass away," He declared, "one jot or tittle shall in no wise pass away from the Law, till all things be accomplished." That is, the unchangeable Moral Law of God shall remain in force until the consummation of Christ's Kingdom in the world.

2. The Relation of the Ancient Moral Law to the Kingdom of Christ. The ancient Moral Law stands for all time. Furthermore, the relations of that Law to the Kingdom of Christ are very definite. Christ declared that both rank and honor in His Kingdom shall be determined by the degree to which the citizens of the Kingdom have observed the Moral Law of God. Salvation is of grace through faith in Christ. But the man who would have high rank and recognition within the Kingdom of Christ must both do the Law himself, and then teach it to others. Those who fail in these obligations "shall be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven."

3. The Vital Observance of the Old Law Required in Christ's Kingdom. Christ taught still another important truth about the

obligations of the Moral Law. He insisted that a vital observance of the Moral Law was necessary as a basis for reckoning righteousness within His Kingdom. For sake of clearness and force, He contrasted this requirement with the superficial and hollow performances of the scribes and the Pharisees of His own day. They obeyed, as it were, from the outside, conforming to law because it was required, and because formal conformity gave advantages in social and ecclesiastical recognition. Such superficial, gain-serving obedience, as Christ here insisted, had neither part nor place in the life of His Kingdom.

**Sincerity Required
in Observing the
Moral Law**
Matthew 5:20

The Moral Law must be obeyed within the Kingdom. But the obedience that counts must come from the heart, and must be impelled by a love for God, and truth, and right, and from a desire to reflect the Spirit of Jesus Christ. This linking of the Moral Law with love in the heart is the new thing which Christ added to the Moral Code of the world: and that new principle of *obedience in the heart* He applied to every law of His Kingdom that He discussed in this Sermon on the Mount. The Old Law stands firm as a standard of life; but the new obedience of the Kingdom springs from a law-fulfilling love in the heart. "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven."

II. The Laws That Apply Between Man and Man

After the above introductory discussion of the Laws of Law as related to His Kingdom, Christ entered at once upon His re-interpretation of particular laws. He first considered the Laws that apply between man and man in the social relationships of life. It is a fact of interest, that Christ took up this phase of the general Moral Law first. This order is the reverse of that in the Ten Commandments, in which Man's duty to God was stated first, and after that Man's duty to man.

**"Thou Shalt Love
Thy Neighbor As
Thyself"**
Matthew 5:21-48
Luke 6:27-36

Why did Christ here reverse the old order? Possibly He desired to speak inductively, and so spoke first of that phase of the Law which seems to be nearer to common life. Christ knew well the ancient order of the Law, and approved it, with emphasis, when He declared that the First Commandment was a supreme

**1. Inductive Treat-
ment of the Law**

love to God, and the Second an adequate love to one's neighbor. Christ's ultimate thought of Law was in accord with the order of duty as stated in the Ten Commandments.¹

Christ probably had another reason for this reversion of the old order of the Law. That reason is to be found in a practical principle of Law, which is frequently emphasized in the New Testament ideal of life. That principle, which has already been mentioned, was the truth of a necessary love in connection with the fulfillment of Moral Law. This practical principle lends a moral glory to the Law as seen in the New Testament.

For example, Paul said, "For all the Law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou Shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." John expressed the truth even stronger, in these words: "If a man say, 'I love God,' and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God, Whom he hath not seen?" Before Paul and John had written those words, Christ had already said, in this Sermon, "Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." And again, He had said, "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."²

Such passages might easily be multiplied, all emphasizing this fundamental conception of Law in the New Testament: that a man's heart and conduct must first be right toward his fellowmen; otherwise, his heart and conduct cannot under any possibility be right toward God. So it was that Christ, in this Sermon, began to treat the Law of His Kingdom on that side of Law where its practical, tangible, and ultimate tests are most easily brought into convincing evidence.

Furthermore, by means of this more tangible approach to the Law, Christ was able, possibly in the most effective way, to emphasize the practical working of the new principle which He had introduced into the Moral Code of the world. He pointed out concretely and definitely how it is that the secret of all social obligations lies deep in the hearts of men.

3. Deed of Sin vs. State of Sin

¹Compare *Exodus* 20:1-17; *Deuteronomy* 6:4-5; *Matthew* 22:36-40; *Mark* 12:29-31. See also the analysis of the Lord's Prayer in the next chapter.

²See *Galatians* 5:14; *1 John* 4:20-21; *Matthew* 5:24; 6:14-15; and *1 Corinthians* 13:1-13.

There, in the fountains of right love, all true obedience must begin. Also, in His concrete emphasis upon this exalted truth of Law, Christ sounded a note of solemn warning to the man who might confuse the relative importance of the overt act and that of the sinful heart. Christ here laid a Divine emphasis against the time-old error of supposing a *deed of sin* to be a worse thing than a *state of sin* in the heart. He thus warned men also against the folly of fearing the courts of men, and forgetting the Court of God.

1. The Law of the Sacredness of Human Life. All right relations between man and man begin with the sacredness of human life. They all rise out of a compelling sense that life is sacred. This is the first and the deepest law of social life. Christ began, therefore, with this fundamental obligation, in His divine exposition of the Laws that govern man's relations to man. The Lord's first thought for social life was this: That life itself is a thing too sacred to be trifled with in any way whatsoever. Upon this foundation of life's sacredness, Christ built up, in a natural and logical sequence, His discussion of the Laws which contribute to a just and righteous social order in the world.

In treating this subject of Law, as already suggested, Christ followed a regular method. He kept constantly before Him two things: the old form of the law, and the new deeper meaning which He gave to that law. This set form of treatment, in this part of the Sermon, has given rise to the uniform outline followed below. First, Christ stated the old law, as it was traditionally understood. Next, He gave His own Divine interpretation of that law. Finally, He advanced compelling reasons for observing that deeper meaning which He had assigned to the particular law then under consideration. That was His regular method of treating the subject of Law.

The sacredness of human life, as understood in the Old Law, was defined in the Sixth Commandment. "Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment." So read the Old Law, with its penalty attached, emphasizing that life was a thing too sacred to be destroyed. But Christ gave a deeper and richer meaning to that law. He pointed out that the sacredness of human life forbids even an estrangement between man

"Thou Shalt Not Kill"

Exodus 20:13

Matthew 5:21-26

Christ's Method of Treating the Moral Law

1. Law Stated: Old and New Conceptions of Life's Sacredness
Matthew 5:21-22

and man. The sacred dignity of life in another person must be respected: for that life, however humble, bears something of the Divine Image.

Christ pointed out, in His deeper conception of this law, that an ill-tempered attitude toward men is forbidden. Under the standards of His Kingdom, such an attitude was to be considered as bad as murder had been considered to be under the Old Law: for such attitude merited the like penalty of judgment. Going still deeper into this law, Christ affirmed that the man who held life in contempt should be brought before the council, and that the man who defamed his brother as a fool should be in danger of hell fire. That is the solemn meaning which Christ gave to the Sixth Commandment; and that commandment He regarded as the foundation of all social relationships in His Kingdom.

Life is sacred. Respect and right regard for life are imperative. Hatred of another person carries the guilt of murder in the heart, and shows one to be wanting in a saving relation with God. John, who certainly heard this Sermon, has echoed Christ's interpretation of this law in these words: "He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him."³

2. Christ's Arguments for a Deeper Regard for Life's Sacredness
Matthew 5:23-26

Furthermore, as Christ continued to emphasize, an estrangement between man and man renders an acceptable worship to God impossible. When such a condition arises, the gift must be left at the altar, until a right attitude between the estranged parties has been restored. Again, the sacredness of life suggests prudence in dealing with men. The man who rightly exalts life as important above merely personal concerns will be quick to adjust all difficulties with men, and thus avoid law-courts, prisons, and penalties.

Thus Christ urged the deeper significance of this law. Spiritual life itself, and the worship of God, and freedom from difficulties in dealing with men, are all connected, in the deeper under-currents of law and life, with the results of a man's positive and active attitude toward the sacredness of human life.

A right attitude toward men is a touchstone of all social righteousness. The greatest law of all demands a supreme love to God. The second greatest requires that a man love his neighbor as himself. These two laws include all other laws and efforts

³See 1. John 3:14-15.

of righteousness: for these two laws, potentially at least, set all the world right. These two laws sanctify and glorify the two channels through which the moral nature of man may express itself.

With the thought of life as the worthy object of such love, Christ began His discussion of man's responsibilities to man in the social relations of life. Later, in closing His analysis of the social laws of life, Christ returned to this supreme principle for a final emphasis upon the requirement of love as the one bond that is able to hold human society together.

2. *The Law of Social Purity.* The first law of society is concerned with the sacredness of human life itself. That being true, the second law of society touches the necessity of social purity in the relations between man and woman. Since life is sacred, the sources of life must be kept pure. Naturally enough it is true, that when life is held in such sacred regard as is insisted upon in the

previous social law, men and women will observe also the sacredness that inheres in the obligation for social purity. The two obligations are but two phases of the same responsibility; and they are inseparable both in theory and in fact. Where life is held sacred, society is pure; and the opposite conditions are equally true.

This Law is the Seventh Commandment in the Mosaic Decalogue. But Christ gave to that old commandment of Moses a far deeper meaning, and a far broader application to life, than common thought had assigned to the ancient Law. In order to make His interpretation of this Law more direct and forceful, Christ separated in His thought the two conditions of life to which this Law applies. First He considered this Law as it applies to those who are unmarried; and later He considered it as applied to those who are married. To both conditions of life He applied this Law of social purity with equal and suitable emphasis.

(2A) *This Law as applied to the Unmarried.* Christ first applied this Law of social purity to the unmarried. The Old Law, in the Seventh Commandment, had said, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Thus the old form of the Law took account of the overt act of social evil. But Christ saw a deeper meaning in this Law. He insisted "that every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."

1. Law Stated: Old and New Meanings of Social Purity
Exodus 20:14
Matthew 5:27-28

"They Twain Shall Be One Flesh"

Genesis 2:24

Matthew 19:5,

and 5:27-32

In this way, through His Divine insight into the true meaning of this old commandment, the Son of God went back of the overt act of social evil, and applied the restraining force of this Law to the beginnings of the social evil in an impure and lusting heart. The secret sources of social evil that lurk in a poisoned imagination, and in an evil heart, must be eradicated from life. The thoughts, words, actions, imaginations, and loves of life must be purified, and brought into harmony with the sacredness of life itself. That is the true meaning of this Law, as it was interpreted by Christ Himself.

This Law must be obeyed. In urging this necessity upon those who are unmarried, Christ used very strong language. He insisted upon absolute cleanness in this particular of life. He pointed out Hell itself as the consequence of violating this imperative obligation for social purity. Possibly there is no other sin that will drag a soul down to Hell so certainly, and so rapidly.

Christ gave no place for compromise on this question. That which degrades life must be eliminated from life. The price of purity must be paid: for life must be pure. The eye that lusts must be plucked out. The hand that offends must be cut off. Whatever is necessary must be done. The deeper meaning of this Law of social purity must be observed. God commands it. History and biography amply prove the truth of Christ's interpretation. The destiny of the individual, and ultimately of all society, depends upon the careful observance of this Law. It must be obeyed, else individuals and nations will surely suffer.

(2B) *This Law as Applied to Those Who are Married.* The same imperative for personal and social purity rests upon those who are married. With this class, the Law requires absolute fidelity between husband and wife, one man and one woman united in the sacred bond of marriage. That is the Law of Marriage that was built into the foundations of the world, a Law which God has confirmed in all history by natural law, as seen in the relative number of men and women born into the world.

But men have always meddled with God's Law for their own convenience. The ancient application of this Law had been so degraded as to allow the marriage bond to be broken with ease, and for sundry and trivial causes. Under that degraded traditional application of this Law, all a man needed to do, if he de-

2. Christ's Arguments for Greater Social Purity
Matthew 5:29-30

1. Law Stated: Old and New Meanings of Marriage Bonds
Genesis 2:23-25
Matthew 5:31-32

sired to divorce his wife, was simply to give her in hand a writing of divorcement. That writing, which declared her to be divorced, was supposed to satisfy the broken marriage bond.

But Christ saw a deeper meaning in the Law of Marriage, which was instituted for the "up-lift" and the propagation of the Race. The thought of Christ was divinely clear and definite on this subject. He insisted that *there is no broken marriage bond*, except for the one cause of fornication, which is the sin of conjugal unfaithfulness on the part of husband or wife. That sin does, in the very nature of the case, break the marriage bond. But marriage, as it is conceived in the Law of God, involves an intimate companionship between man and woman, and a oneness of life between them, which cannot otherwise be broken except by death. That is the unvarying truth of God's Word, and also the unvarying view of Christ concerning the Law of Marriage and the question of divorce.⁴

This view of the Marriage Relation, and of its sacred obligations, Christ argued with very great force. According to His Divine Authority, both the purity and the permanency of the marriage bond must be maintained. There must be no commission of the one sin of unfaithfulness which breaks the marriage bond. The previous Law of social purity for the unmarried effectively cares for that point of sacred obligation. The prohibition in that matter is absolute. Against otherwise breaking the marriage bond, Christ advanced two arguments which no one can gainsay.

2. Christ's Arguments for a Pure and Permanent Marriage Bond Matthew 5:32

⁴See the discussions on pages 401, and 417-422, and the Index, under "Adultery." Consider also the following points:

(1) God's original thought of Man, Marriage, and the sex-relations of life. *Genesis* 1:27-28; 2:18, 23-25; 5:2; and 9:1, 7.

(2) God's thought on these subjects as defined in the Ancient Law, and taught by the prophets. *Exodus* 20:14; *Leviticus* 18:18, 20; 20:10; *Deuteronomy* 5:18; 22:22; 24:1-4; *Ruth* 1:9; *Nehemiah* 13:26; *Job* 24:15-18; 31:1; *Proverbs* 5:1-23; 6:20-35; 7:6-27; 18:22; 31:10-12; *Jeremiah* 5:7-10; 23:10; 29:23; (and a spiritual application of the Law on these subjects), *Ezekiel* 16:16-59; 23:43-48; *Malachi* 2:14-15; and many other Scriptures.

(3) God's original thought on these subjects as interpreted and emphasized by Christ, and glorified in the loftiness of His Divine and authoritative applications. *Matthew* 5:27-32; 19:3-12; *Mark* 10:2-12; and *Luke* 16:18. See the Index for the passages in which He treated the sin of adultery.

(4) God's original thought as expounded and emphasized by Paul. *Romans* 7:2-3; *1. Corinthians* 6:15-18; 7:2-11, 39; 11:11-12; *Ephesians* 5:28, 31, 33; *1. Thessalonians* 4:3; *1. Timothy* 5:14-15; and other passages.

(5) God's attitude toward the violation of His original thought on these subjects. Besides the passages above, see *Isaiah* 59:3-14; *John* 8:41, 44; *Romans* 1:29-32; *1. Corinthians* 5:9-13; 6:9-10; *Galatians* 5:19-21; *Ephesians* 5:1-5; *1. Timothy* 1:8-10; *Jude* v. 7; *Revelation* 2:6, 14-15; 17:1-5; 22:14-15; and many other indications of Divine judgment.

The man who works his way through the above, and many other like passages of God's Word, must surely come to some very important conclusions respecting the Law of God on the subject of Marriage, Divorce, and the Sex-relations of life. Certainly he must see that the laws in America to-day are far below what Christ taught on these important subjects.

The first argument of Christ was, that the permanency of the marriage bond must be maintained as a matter of justice to the woman who might otherwise be unlawfully put away. There is but one cause for divorce; and that cause is itself a divorce. If a wife should be divorced for that sin, then she is an adulteress. But if she is not guilty of that sin, and yet is divorced, on the basis of Christ's view of the Law of Marriage, she is given the character of an adulteress, which is of course both untrue and unjust. The prevention of this social evil was Christ's first argument for observing and maintaining the sacredness of the marriage relation; and the principle involved in this argument applies with equal force to the husband as it does to the wife.

The second argument of Christ was, that the permanency of the marriage bond should be maintained in order to prevent the further sin in society which might arise later from the unlawful marriages of those who have been divorced. "But I say unto you," said the Divine Interpreter on this occasion, "that every one that putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, maketh her an adulteress: and whosoever shall marry her when she is put away committeth adultery." That is the Law of God in unmistakable language. To prevent that subsequent sin, for which too many divorces are sought, Christ argued that the permanency of the marriage bond should be maintained.

This study of this Law has sought to set forth only Christ's own interpretations of the Seventh Commandment. Certainly the Son of God knew what that Law means, and how it should be applied to life. It may be further observed, that no other Law of God has more sacred emphasis in all of His Word, and none has a more far-reaching application, than this searching Law of social purity. Life is sacred; and the sources of life must be kept pure. That is what this Law means.

3. *The Law of the Integrity of Speech.* The two social laws already considered were directed toward questions of life itself, its sacredness, and its origin. The third Law of social life relates to the means of communication between mind and mind, and the methods of promoting confidence in that which is communicated. The purpose of this Law is to promote truth in social relationships. In His interpre-

**"I Hate Every
False Way"**
Psalm 119:104
Matthew 5:33-37

tation of this Law, Christ conceived Character, truthfulness, and the confidence of men, to be commensurate, the one with the other, in the social exchanges of the world. This Law therefore requires absolute sincerity of character, and absolute integrity of speech between man and man.⁵

The Mosaic Law had said, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against (or to) thy neighbor." From the beginning, Truth has been the Law of God's world: for God is

1. Law Stated: Old and New Requirements for Integrity of Speech infinite in truth. Whoever opposes truth opposes God, with ultimate consequences that are inevitable. By the time of Christ, the wording of this Law had assumed the traditional form which He gave in this Sermon: "Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths." This Law, as here stated, did two things. It forbade false swearing. It also tried to fortify the integrity of speech, by urging the solemnity of an oath as an obligation made to God Himself, for that is what an oath is.

But Christ saw that the Law of Truth was far more than a negative prohibition against false oaths. He therefore said, very pointedly: "Swear not at all; neither by the Heaven, . . . nor by the earth, . . . nor by Jerusalem, . . . Neither . . . by thy head, . . . But let your speech be, 'Yea, yea; Nay, nay': and whatsoever is more than these is of evil (or, of the evil one)."

The meaning of these words is plain. Christ here ruled out, one by one, the objects by which men swear. Some He ruled out, as being too sacred for such use, others as futile. In this way, Christ eliminated all oaths, and other external means of supporting the integrity of speech, from the ordinary commerce of mind with mind. In His last positive statement quoted above, Christ emphasized that the real and effective support of the integrity of speech is not in oaths, however solemnly imposed. The real support of such integrity is in the moral character of the person who is speaking. That is the central principle of this Law, as it was interpreted by the Lord Jesus.

He who would speak the truth, and have his words accepted, must first be true himself. That is the new meaning of this law which Christ urged upon His hearers, and upon the world. Speech is the voice of the life, no more and no less. The measure of sincerity and truth there is in a man's life gives the exact measure of the carrying power of his words among

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⁵See *Exodus* 20:16; *Leviticus* 19:11; *Psalms* 58:3; 62:9; 101:7; *Colossians* 3:9; *Proverbs* 11:1; *Psalms* 15:1-2; *John* 8:44.

men. His word of honor goes no further than, but only just so far as, his character lends confidence in the estimation of

2. Christ's Arguments for Character as the Support of Speech
Matthew 5:37

men. His "Yea" is *yea*, one hundred per cent accepted; and his "Nay" is *nay* in the same proportion; else the discount is chargeable to sin in the life. His word is as good as *his life*, and no better.

The underlying truth of Christ's argument is this. In the last analysis, there is no such thing in life as *saying* one thing and *being* another. The contradiction will inevitably contradict. The sound of the

(1) Saying and Being are Equal

"sounding brass" is certain to be heard; and the presence of the tinkling cymbals will always betray the insincerity which may lurk even deep in the

under-currents of life. And when sincerity of character is once questioned, or even suspected, there is added an effective discounting footnote to all that the man thus suspected may have to say. In other words, speech gets its true meanings, not from the Dictionary, but from the moral integrity of the speaker. This law is operative in life; albeit, men do blindly think otherwise at times.

The truth is, that a man's speech means no more than his character confirms. This truth, rightly understood, means that a man may say *in fact* the exact opposite of what

(2) Character Alone Confirms Speech

his words would ordinarily mean. Sin lends much irony to the words of men. The connotations of value in all speech rise out of

moral character. The felt-need of an oath to support one's speech is an evidence of conscious sin in the life, such as discounts social confidence. The use of an oath for such purpose is a public announcement that such sin does exist. Christ declared that the promptings for external supports to the integrity of the "Yea" and the "Nay" come from evil (or, from the evil one). Christ strongly insisted that social confidence rests ultimately in moral character. That is where God's Law of Truth intends such confidence ever to rest.⁶

⁶The Oath is a solemn act of worship, wherein God is called upon to witness the truth of a statement made, or of an obligation assumed. As such, the Oath in its proper place had Divine sanction and appointment. In some instances it was definitely required by the Lord. The Oath, in its sacred character, was used in the making of covenants, in the establishing of legality in the courts, and in general where the assumption of an obligation involved a community, or others (as another generation) than the person making the oath. If one will look up, in a good Concordance, all the Bible passages under "Oath," and "Swear," he will find this subject an interesting study. But he will find that most of those Scriptures have little to do with the question of personal truthfulness which Christ was discussing at this time. In that matter, the support of speech is not in external oaths, but in the moral character of the speaker.

4. *The Law of Recompense between Man and Man.* The next Law of the Kingdom that is operative between Man and Man is that which involves the principles of recompense. The idea of evening up justice, in the sense of repaying like for like with full measure, is as old as the world. This conception of recompense, sanctioned as a law of social life, prevailed in the world in earlier times. But Christ, in this Sermon, gave to the world a new, and correct, and adequate conception of this Law, and of what is really involved in an act of righteous recompense.

The Law of Recompense, in its old form, required "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." The error in that conception of recompense was this. In a way, it did even up justice; but, in doing so, it brought, or tended always to bring, both parties down to the lower level of the one who had first committed the offense. At its best, the operation of that old conception of this Law, in as far as it was personally applied, could not be free from the impulses that arise from the less noble side of life, the extremes of which are seen in the spirit of vindictiveness and of malicious revenge. Recompense that proposes to repay *in kind* an evil that is done tends always to lower the moral tone of the individuals concerned, and of social life in general.

What Christ desired in His Kingdom was an operation of this Law that would lift the erring man up to the higher level of the other party who was in the right. This more wholesome result Christ saw to be possible, if men would only understand and apply the more effective method which Christ prescribed for securing recompense when men have been wronged.

The Divine Interpreter began His discussion of this Law by denying outright the correctness and effectiveness of the older conception of this Law. "But I say unto you," He said, "Resist not him that is evil." Then turning to the positive, constructive aspects of this Law, Christ announced the principle by which an effective recompense and blessing may both be secured. "But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you." That is the true Law of Recompense.

Christ argued the commanding force of this true and more

**"Not Rendering
Evil for Evil"**

1. Peter 3:9
Proverbs 20:22
Matthew 5:38-42
Luke 6:27-30

**1. Law Stated: Old
and New Meanings
of Recompense**
Matthew 5:38-39a
Luke 6:27-28

wholesome way of securing recompense, by showing how its application exalts character in the ordinary conduct of life. That

2. Christ's Arguments for an Ennobling Method of Recompense
Matthew 5:39b-42
Luke 6:29-36

was His first argument. There are substantial gains to the man who will, in the face of evil and injustice, conduct himself as the Lord Jesus here suggested. The experience of men also confirms the truth and the wisdom of the Lord's suggestions.

This nobler method of recompense does exalt character. There is a conscious ennobling spirit that rises in a man's soul when

(1) Nobler Recompense Exalts Character

he undergoes, of his own will, additional indignity, as in turning the other cheek also; when he willingly endures greater injustice, as in giving the cloak after the coat has been

taken away by force of law; when he readily renders an extra service, as in going the second mile; and when he ministers to the needs of men where there is little hope of pecuniary returns. Such conduct requires forbearance, resolution, and active grace; but these are the things that develop and enrich the spirit of every man.

The Lord's second argument for this nobler form of recompense pointed to its effectiveness. This manner of responding

(2) Nobler Recompense Is More Effective

to evil and injustice brings a recompense that is triumphant and Christian. It is recompense: for it is like heaping coals of fire upon the head of an enemy. It is tri-

umphant: for it is complete, and that without compromise. By returning good for evil, the offended man thrusts the offending man's evil back upon his own conscience, which has been quickened by the contrast in the conduct of the two men. The effect of this movement is to even up justice by punishing the evil man with the consciousness of his own wrong doing. Such recompense is Christian: for it tends, both in nature and in purpose, to make right the man who is in the wrong, and thereby to bring a blessing into the lives of all who are concerned.

The third argument of Christ speaks the imperative voice of Divine Law. The Christian must do these things. The power

(3) Nobler Recompense Is Christ-Like and Imperative

to endure wrong is Christ-like. The grace that turns an evil occasion to constructive account, through forbearance, love, and service, is also Christ-like. The Golden Rule

was the working principle of Christ's own life. Such distinctions of conduct are, therefore, imperative in the life of every

Christian.⁷ The old way of loving a friend and hating an enemy, of giving an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, of repaying and requiring like for like, is the way of the world. But the Christian way is the more effective way of returning love for hatred, and good for evil. This way of Christ evens up justice on the higher plain, and brings the blessing that every Christian desires to bring.⁸

5. *The Law of Universal Love: the Union-Bond of all Society.* The last, and the highest of all Laws between man and man, is the

**"Owe No Man
Anything, but to
Love One Another"**
Romans 13:8-10
Matthew 5:43-48
Luke 6:31-36

Law of Love. To that Law, now made universal, Christ gave a new and deeper significance. It is love that binds all society together; and without love there is no true social bond. Sacred regard for life, social purity, social confidence, and recompense by

doing good for evil, all help to promote right relations between man and man. But these are all inadequate, and would all be in vain without love, which is the one great inner spirit of all Law. The final principle in society, the deepest of all social laws, is a love in all that reaches down to the lowest, and out to the farthest, and makes no exceptions. When this is wanting, there may be aggregations of people, but there is no true society.

The Law of Love, in its old form, was supposed to mean that love should answer to love. That old Law had said, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy."

**1. Law Stated: Old
and New Meanings
of Love**
Matthew 5:43-45
Luke 6:31

But Christ said, "Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be sons of your Father Who is in Heaven." In this contrast, Christ announced

that the old interpretation of this Law was entirely inadequate for the spirit of His Kingdom, and for the standards of the Christian life.

⁷See Luke 6:29-36.

⁸The Law of Recompense, as its deeper significance was set forth by Christ in this Sermon, was restated by Paul, point by point, and with great emphasis, in his *Letter to the Romans*. In Chapter 12, verses 17-21, he said,

"Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.' Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

In this passage Paul has said, That recompense is not to be sought by repaying like for like; that the less noble feelings of life must have no place in giving a recompense; that goodness is the most effective punishment one can bestow on an evil-doer; and that recompense must always leave men on the higher, and not the lower, level of life.

Love does answer to love, with the joys of complacency. But love is capable of far more than complacent regard. Love has also its elements of pity and compassion, from which arise its spirit of unselfish helpfulness. Love has its reciprocating response, and its complacent repose. But love has also its impelling principles that lead to service without much considering the deserts of the one to whom the service is rendered. The old Law of Love put a premium on reciprocation in love, and ignored too much the obligations for pity and compassion, which lead to helpful service.

The effect of that view of love is to limit the responsive side of life. The Priest and the Levite, in the story of the Good Samaritan, had been brought up under that conception of the Law of Love. There is no wonder that they passed by the wounded man without responding to his needs. That was the natural result of their schooling in love. With them, the Law of Love had been too narrowly interpreted, as requiring only a reciprocating response. Their hearts had been deadened to the ordinary feelings of human kindness by their long punctilious observances of this Law as it was wrongly interpreted by them.

The larger meaning of love, which includes pity and compassion, was that which Christ emphasized as the spirit that binds

(2) Love as Compassion Is God-Like

society together. "Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be sons of Your Father Who is in Heaven: for He maketh His sun rise on the

evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust." That is the true spirit and deeper nature of love, which, because of pity and compassion, helps even the unworthy. Such love is God-like, because it loves first, and continuously, actively, and universally, and waits not for reciprocation, and the stimulus of a first love in others.

This Law of Love, as it was interpreted by Christ, means that a man's solemn obligation to his fellowman is to love him, and to love him with a love that waits not upon

(3) Love at Its Very Best

conditions. Complacency is fine, and divine, and pleasant. But pity, and compassion, and helpfulness, are the sublime duty of life; and

these are a diviner thing in dealing with men. That love which honestly prays God's favor upon a personal enemy, and prays the more earnestly because he is an enemy, springs from the divinest depths of the human heart. Such was the thought of Christ in the passage now under consideration.

In the first argument by which Christ urged the necessity of this larger conception and practice of love, He declared the essen-

2. Christ's Arguments for a Larger Love

Matthew 5:45-48

Luke 6:32-36

tial relation of true love in the heart to the fact of redemption. This deeper love, which He insisted upon, helps to make men the sons of God, and causes them to be recognized as such by those who see this larger love in action.

True love between man and man reveals sonship to God. That is a high and compelling argument. God is Love. He loves the world. "He first loved us." He bestows

(1) Love Reveals Sonship to God

goodness universally from His heart of compassion and benevolence. He sends sunshine and rain alike upon the good and the evil, upon the just and the unjust. He waits not for men to respond with an answering love. He sends His blessings, that He may thus awaken their hearts to respond. When men do likewise, it is the divine within them at work, showing their exalted kinship with God, Who has touched their hearts with saving grace.

For the Christian, who has been renewed in spirit by the redeeming love of God, this larger and deeper love is imperative.

(2) Love the True Badge of Discipleship

In His second argument, Christ insisted that such love is the distinctive badge of discipleship. To love only where there is an answering love; to do good only where good is returned; to lend only where the repaying is secured in advance; to "salute your brethren only," are merely matters of accommodation in life. Such actions have more often a touch of commercialism than of great moral value. They reveal the superficial heart of common sinners, materialistic publicans, and Gentiles generally. The man in Christ's Kingdom must do more than that, and do it better. He must show a depth of sincerity, and a breadth of pity and compassion that is unknown in the world outside of the Kingdom.

The Christian must respond with a love that is like the love of God. This standard of Christian life was the final argument

(3) Love the Necessary Response to God's Love

of Christ in support of the larger love for which He was pleading. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son," that men might have life through Him. "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." So said the Spirit of God in John's Writings.⁹ Elsewhere Christ

⁹See 1. John 4:7-21. This entire passage is highly instructive on the subject of Love and its responsibilities, and should be read in this connection.

said, "I lay down My life for the sheep. . . . I lay it down of Myself." Again He said, "This is My commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you." In the argument of this Sermon, Christ challenged an answering love in men that would be broad enough, and deep enough, to be worthy of the love which they had received from the Father in Heaven, as expressed through the gift and the sacrifice of His Son for their salvation.

The social attitude of the Christian must be filled with love, because he represents and reflects the love of God. His life must exemplify a quality and a measure of love that is worthy of his Father in Heaven, worthy of his Savior Who died for him, and worthy of himself as a redeemed son of God. The Christian must love as God loves, unselfishly, helpfully, and universally. That is what Christ suggested in this argument. "But love your enemies, and do them good, and lend, never despairing; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be sons of the Most High: for He is kind toward the unthankful and evil. Be ye merciful, even as your Father is merciful." Such love alone rises to the standard of a true Christian life.

This Law of Love, a deeper love, a love full of pity, of compassion, and of active benevolence, is the crowning law of all social life. Where this Law really operates with sincerity, there life is sacred, and the sources of life are both sacred and pure. Where Love reigns, Truth also reigns: for there is then no desire to deceive. Where Love is, there the recompenses of life are all prescribed and executed by hearts that desire to help and bless.

Love alone unites men into society. All else means opposition and separation. Society is democratic when men are self-governed by principles of truth and justice enthroned within their own hearts. Society is Christian when the supreme inner governing power of life is a supreme love for God and for men,—a love that restrains and constrains, always for righteousness; a love that is Christ-like, loving and giving self for the world; a love such as results only from the indwelling of God's own Spirit in the hearts of men.

Such a love is the most practical need of the world to-day; for such a love alone is able to save the world from self-destruction on the lower levels of life. The curse of autocratic control is that it is external, compelling life from without. It cramps, and crushes, and kills the inner principles of the heart, from which arises all that is true, and noble, and social in life. Such a force cannot long hold any society together.

The standing menace of a democracy is that its people should fail to have this fountain of larger love in their hearts, out of which alone can come a noble self-governing patriotism, and a justly socialized local, national, and inter-national life. A true democracy without the Spirit of Jesus Christ is an impossibility.

The tragedy of anarchy, and of all the *isms* that tend thereto, is that they do not have, and in the nature of the case cannot have, this essential social bond of larger love. Hence it is that no anarchy has long endured, or can long endure, in the world.

The glory and the triumph of Christianity is that it promotes this deeper love in the hearts of men. Hence Christianity sanctifies and ennobles every phase of social life that is right. It permeates society, as the one effective union-bond. Christ, with Divine understanding, placed this Law of Love highest among the laws that govern man's relations with man. In doing this, Christ laid a Divine emphasis upon that which the world most needs to-day, a Christ-like love to sanctify and uplift society. That seems to be the conclusion which Christ Himself has drawn, in that He has made the Law of Love the crowning Law of man's social relations.

CHAPTER IX

THE KINGDOM: THE LAWS OF WORSHIP

"I am the Lord thy God. . . . Thou shalt have no other gods before Me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything. . . . Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God. . . . Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain. . . . Remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy. . . . The Seventh Day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God . . . wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath Day and hallowed it." *Exodus 20:2-11.*

"Give unto the Lord the glory due unto His Name: bring an offering, and come before Him: worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." *1. Chronicles 16:29.*

"Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith . . . not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together." *Hebrews 10:22-25.*

"Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy Will be done on earth, as it is in Heaven." *Matthew 6:9-10.*

This study of the Law of Christ's Kingdom, begun in the previous chapter, extends through Chapters VIII, IX, and X. The general outline of the study is continued through the three chapters, showing the different aspects of the Law as it was discussed by Christ. A study has already been made, in Chapter VIII, of the Laws of Law itself, and of the Social Laws of the Kingdom. In Chapter X, there will be a study of the Laws that are personal in their nature and application. In this Chapter IX, the study is concerned with the Laws of Worship and of Religious Services. This entire chapter is occupied with this one aspect of the General Law of the Kingdom. The continued outline has, therefore, in this chapter, but one main division, which is numbered as follows:

III. The Laws That Apply Between Man and God

This chapter, as already suggested, deals with that portion of the Sermon on the Mount in which Christ laid down anew the principles that define Man's duty directly toward God. In this portion of His Sermon, Christ gave no new Law; neither did he modify the Old Law in any essential manner. The thing He did was this. He translated into terms that were better suited to immediate practical application certain principles of the Ancient Law, as it was given to Moses. The Law itself

"Thy Vows Are
upon Me, O God: I
will Render Praises
unto Thee"
Psalm 56:12
Matthew 6:1-34

was not changed; but its requirements were emphasized, more than ever, as binding upon the hearts of men.

These are the Laws that regulate worship and religious services. The Laws here considered define the right attitude of life toward God, and its right expression directly toward Him. The Way of Life has already been given by Christ. He taught, as seen in Chapter IV, that a saved life has a receiving side and a responding side. The outlet of a renewed life in man has two channels. In one direction, life flows out horizontally in helpful service to men. In the other direction, life rises vertically upward in the praise and worship of God. Besides these two outlets of life, there is no way of giving expression to a saved life. There is no other way to "*work out* your salvation with fear and trembling," as Paul has suggested.

With the former of these outlets of life, Christ has already dealt in His discussion, in the previous chapter, of Man's duty to Man. With the latter outlet of life, as expressed directly toward God through worship and religious services, Christ was concerned in that part of His Sermon which is now under consideration. The Laws of Worship, as Christ analyzed them, are concerned with three central topics of duty. These topics are, the general principle of sincerity in worship, the regulations of the external forms of religious exercises rendered as worship to God, and the inner motive of all religious performances, which is a supreme devotion of the heart to God, and to His Son Jesus Christ. To these three topics are attached the Laws that apply directly between Man and God.

(A) The Principle of Sincerity in Man's Relations to God

The first Law of all relations to God calls for Truth and Sincerity. God requires those principles first in all dealings with

<p>"For We . . . Worship God in the Spirit, and Rejoice in Jesus Christ" Philippians 3:3 Matthew 6:1 cf. John 4:23-24</p>	<p>Him. Faith must be correct and sincere. Love must be correct and sincere. Works must be correct and sincere. Worship must be correct and sincere. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth." Correctness, according to the truth of God, and singleness of purpose to exalt His glory must characterize all acceptable worship. "Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men, to be seen of them: else ye have no reward with your Father which is in Heaven."</p>
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This basic Law of Religion touches the motive of religious performancés. After Truth, and indeed as a part of Truth itself, this Law requires Sincerity. The two things stand together. The spirit that would seek through worship and religious services to secure the praises of men annuls the favor of God. Such worship is not worship. At least, it is not worship of God. Man must be sincere when he comes into the presence of God: for "the Lord looketh on the heart."¹ Sincerity is essential to all true worship. Sincerity is, in fact, as the subject was treated by Christ, the first Law of Worship and of all religious services.

(B) The Laws That Regulate the External Forms of Worship

Sincerity is the first principle of all worship. From that first principle, Christ advanced, in the next part of His Sermon, to the Laws that regulate the external Forms through which sincere worship finds an expression. The three Forms of worship which the Lord considered in this Sermon are Alms-Giving, Prayer, and Fasting. These three Forms are more than representative: they include all direct expression of the inner spiritual life toward God.²

These Forms of worship, Alms-Giving, Prayer, and Fasting, have appeared in the religious life of all Christian ages. They have their equivalents in the Christian life of today. *Alms-Giving*, as the term was used in Christ's day, would now cover all the services of charity, and all the regular and special support of the Kingdom, which may be rendered by contributions of money, or of other things of material value. Alms-Giving in that day combined the two modern ideas of personal charity and of general benevolences. *Prayer* meant the same then that it means now.

Fasting was then sometimes personal, and sometimes social, being participated in by a congregation, or by an entire community. As it was divinely appointed, Fasting involved an abstaining from food for a time, as a means of intensifying humility before God and prayer to Him, the end being to secure (usually to regain) Divine favor, or to obtain Divine guidance.

¹1. Samuel 16:7.

²See Revelation 22:9; Isaiah 29:13-17; Ezekiel 33:30-32; Zephaniah 2:11; Matthew 15:7-9; Psalm 116:12-14.

Preaching might be thought of as a fourth Form of worship, since preaching services involve worship. However, such activities of the Church are composite exercises, combining the above Forms of worship with definite elements of spiritual services rendered to men.

Religion decays rapidly. Formulæ of response are subject to the deadening laws of habit. Alms-Giving, Prayer, and Fasting

2. Christ's Method of Treating the Laws of Worship

may easily fall, on the one hand, into mere perfunctory routine, or, on the other hand, into empty and even ostentatious public display. In either case, the supposed act of worship loses its vital character, and fails of its appointed purposes. Such a fate had befallen much of the worship in the time of Christ. His problem, and that of His Kingdom, was to restore vitality and sincerity to the worship of God.

In His efforts to accomplish this end, Christ, in dealing with the three Forms of worship, Alms-Giving, Prayer, and Fasting, followed a fixed order of treatment. His method was simple, but very effective. He gave first the common practice of that day as respects the particular Form of worship then under consideration. After giving the common practice, He next gave the proper Form, and the proper spirit, in which that particular type of worship should be rendered in order that it might be made acceptable to God.

I. The Law Regulating Alms-Giving. Christ discussed first the Law that regulates Alms-Giving. This Law He linked at once with the foregoing Law of sincerity.

"It is More Blessed To Give Than To Receive"

Acts 20:35

Matthew 6:2-4

Introducing the principles of this Law, Christ said, "When therefore thou doest alms, sound not a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men.

Verily I say unto you, They have received their reward."

That was the customary way of giving alms in the days of Christ, Who doubtless had seen the performance many a time.

The entire scene, as He described it, was a display of insincerity. When alms were given, a great public display of the performance was made, with the blowing of

1. Common Practice in Alms-Giving

trumpets, so that all the community might know that alms were being given. The giving was hypocritical: for it was not intended that God should thereby be glorified. The purpose of the noise was merely to attract attention to the giving. The motive

which animated the giver was a low desire for the applause of men. The results sought after were always attained. The trumpets attracted attention to the hollow giving. Men gave their applause, which was equally hollow. Then the alms-givers made their *exit* from the scene, with the hollow joys of a smug complacency. And the curtain fell!

But Christ insisted that such a scene of hypocrisy should never be staged by the child of God. The exact opposite, in deed, and

2. Proper Method and Spirit of Alms-Giving

motive, and result, must be striven for by every one who would worship God in the Giving of Alms. Christ gave great emphasis to this truth. "But when thou doest alms,"

He said, "let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: that thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father Who seeth in secret shall recompense thee." That is the simple Law of Alms-Giving, if the exercise is to have religious merit as an act of worship, glorifying God. This Law is simple; but it is imperative: for the secret motive of every approach to God must be both correct in truth and sincere in spirit.

The element of secrecy in Alms-Giving has several advantages. The secrecy of the deed is a safe-guard to the sincerity of its

3. Advantages of Secrecy in Alms- Giving

character as an act of worship to God. The motives for secrecy point in two important directions. The sincere alms-giver does not desire to exalt himself. Furthermore, know-

ing that the sensibilities of the poor and unfortunate are very delicate, the sincere giver of alms desires to render service without giving offense.

Such motives, in the nature of the case, must be sincere. They lift the soul up into the very presence of God. Such giving is as a sweet savor unto the Lord. The results are inevitable. The Heavenly Father, Who is pleased with sincerity in all things, has always a suitable recompense for the soul that is sincere in giving. Right giving is always an act of the spirit, an act that reaches out toward God. Such giving is never a matter for public advertisement. If God, Who needs no sounding of trumpets to attract His attention, recognizes the act as sincere, then that is all that the soul of the true giver desires. The reward will be forth-coming: for God never forgets. These are the underlying principles in the Law of Alms-Giving.

2. *The Law Regulating Prayer.* Likewise, the Law of Prayer requires that Prayer should also be sincere. This requirement applies alike to the Method and to the Substance

of Prayer, otherwise it avails nothing either as worship to God, or in supplicating His favor toward men. Because

"Pray without Ceasing"

1. Thess. 5:17

Matthew 6:5-15

of its importance, and for sake of greater clearness of instruction, Christ considered these two aspects of prayer, its Method and its Substance, separately in this discussion.

(2A) *This Law as Applied to the Method of Prayer.* Christ analyzed first the right Method of Prayer. Here again, as in all

"Men Ought Always To Pray"

Luke 18:1

Matthew 6:5-6

questions of worship, the first Law of praying involves the principles of truth and sincerity. This underlying principle of prayer, Christ emphasized by contrasting the common methods of praying in that day with

the correct method as He would have men pray.

The common method of prayer, in that day, as the Savior had probably often seen and heard men pray, He described in the following words of instruction. "And when

1. Common Method of Prayer

ye pray, ye shall not be as the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have received their reward."

Those who prayed in that way loved to make an ostentatious parade of their praying. It was in the nature of an exhibition before the public. Their motive was self-advertisement from the religious point of view. The result was certain. Those who thus prayed were "seen of men." They were also commented upon as being very pious and full of religion. They had already received their reward. They had sought publicity, and received it; and there was an end of their prayers.

But true prayer, as Christ immediately explained, was something very different from the common custom of that day. Christ defined true prayer in this way. "But thou,

2. Proper Method and Spirit of Prayer

when thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father, Which is in secret, and thy Father Which is in secret shall recompense thee." That is the true manner and spirit of prayer. It is never a mere public performance for the purpose of being seen of men.

Yet it is quite possible to pray in public places. Dwight L. Moody is said to have done most of his praying while he walked the streets from one place of work to another. Nehemiah

"prayed to the God of Heaven," while standing fear-stricken in the presence of the king. Daniel prayed in a public place, having previously opened his windows toward Jerusalem, so that the people might thus see him praying to the true God. Even the Publican, whom Christ held up as an example of humility and effectiveness in prayer, seems, though "standing afar off," yet to have been within view of others. It is possible to pray on the streets, but never as a street-corner exhibition. Prayer is not necessarily conditioned at all by the place; but it is profoundly conditioned by the spirit of sincerity and truth in which men pray.³

Yet there is something substantial gained to prayer by the secrecy of the "inner chamber," or the "prayer closet," as it is commonly called. The closed door shuts out the distracting world, and leaves the soul within free to commune with God. Withdrawing for prayer away from the public view both proves and promotes sincerity. The consciousness of being alone with God stimulates the deeper spiritual life. Prayer is an act of the soul, visible only to the eye of God. Prayer is an outgoing of the spirit-life toward God, in adoration, thanksgiving, confession, and supplication. When God has seen these things in a sincere heart, He does not fail of suitable recompense: for true prayer is both heard and answered.

(2B) *This Law as Applied to the Substance of Prayer.* Sincerity is both required and evinced in the substance of prayer, as well as in the method. Christ, continuing His instruction in the Law of Prayer, set forth, in clear and logical order, the principles that should enter into the make-up of this Form of Divine Worship. Prayer has a correct method of presentation. It has also a proper substance which is to be presented, when a man rightly prays to God.

The common practice of that day as respected the make-up of prayers was to pile up the volume of a prayer, as if praying consisted in the multitude of words that one might use. This practice in praying was especially common among the Gentiles, for reasons that will presently appear. But this practice Christ condemned. He declared it to be "vain repeti-

**(1) Possible To
Pray in Public
Places**

**(2) Advantages of
Praying in Secret**

**"Continuing Instant
in Prayer"**
Romans 12:12
Matthew 6:7-15

**1. Common Make-
Up of Prayers**

³See *Nehemiah* 2:4; *Daniel* 6:10-13; and *Luke* 18:13.

tion." It failed to accomplish anything. The reason for such failure is not hard to find.

Such prayer is built upon a wrong conception both of God and of prayer. The true Father in Heaven needs not to be told of any condition or need of human life; for He knows all things. But the Gentiles of that day, with their pagan conceptions of their gods, thought otherwise. They supposed that a God would need to be told of human needs, and to be told repeatedly. Thus they hoped, as a result of repetition, at length to be heard.

That was the heathen conception of God and consequently of prayer. But Christ used that Gentile conception to condemn and to correct the Jews of His own day. By holding up to them those pagan views, He exposed the enormity of the sins of those Jews who, for mere pretense, made long prayers, which were not only hypocritical in spirit, but also in substance positively dishonoring to the character of the God of Israel.

Prayer must be different. "Be not therefore like unto them," said Christ: "for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him." The prime factor

2. Proper Content and Spirit of Prayer in the act of praying, at least so far as the making of petitions is concerned, is an abiding confidence in God's careful knowledge of His children, and of all their needs. Prayer requires a faith that exalts God. Prayer exalts Divine Grace: for he who prays must have faith that God is able to give something, and to give all things. Prayer exalts Divine Knowledge: for he who prays must believe that God already knows the needs of those who pray. Prayer exalts Divine Wisdom: for he who prays must have confidence that God will give only that which is wise and good. Prayer exalts Divine Love: for he who prays must believe that God, Who has a perfect Father's heart, desires always to bless and save His children.

The highest petitions for human welfare are those that enthrone God over the lives of men, such as, "Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in Heaven." God's attitude and desire is to bless. The problems of Divine Goodness are problems of faith and prayer, of love and works, on the part of those whom He would bless. Prayer must, first of all, embody a faith that brings life into harmony with the essential character of God. Such a faith naturally expresses itself in confession and thanksgiving, as well as in adoration and supplication. The secret of true prayer is a right inner attitude toward God. Such attitude every true prayer must contain.

(2C) *The Lord's Prayer: An Example of Right Prayer.* The principles of right Prayer were embodied in the example of prayer given by the Son of God. The *Lord's Prayer*, as it is commonly called, is a perfect example of what a prayer should be. It is brief in outline, simple in language, direct in manner, and sincere in spirit. In a few well-chosen words, it covers the four essential points of all true prayer. This Prayer may be studied under the following outline.

**"After This Manner
Therefore Pray Ye"**
Matthew 6:9-15

The *Lord's Prayer* is properly addressed. "Our Father, Who art in Heaven." These words are an expression of spiritual life that has the obvious purpose of a sincere and exclusive worship to God. In the next point, this Prayer, in its first group of petitions, exalts *God's Interests* in this present world, —His Character, His Kingdom, and His Sovereignty in the lives of men.

In this first group there are three petitions. The first of these petitions magnifies the Moral Character of God. When a man prays, "Hallowed be Thy Name," he expresses a desire that men may regard God as perfect in holiness of character; and in so praying, the man must subscribe his own energies to the accomplishing of that important purpose. The second petition is, "Thy Kingdom Come." The purport of this petition is to extend the Kingdom of Christ, which He was then discussing, over all the world. When a man sincerely prays this petition, he lays life itself, and all of his resources, at the disposal of God for the accomplishment of His own purposes of saving grace in the hearts and lives of men throughout the world.

"Thy will be done, as in Heaven, so on earth." This third petition of the first group establishes the sovereignty of Divine Law in all the world. This Law, being an expression of the very Nature of God, is the same for Himself, for His Son, for His Spirit, and for His children. This petition therefore prays that men may so perform the will of God, in obedience and in co-operation with Him, as to make it possible for Him to perform His own will concerning them. In this way, the first part of this great Prayer of Christ unites the whole of Man's life with the interests of God, in a sublime organization of Truth, and Law, and Righteousness, and Blessedness.⁴

⁴It may also be observed that the first part of this *Lord's Prayer* brings the life of Man into association with the Holy Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The first petition, which immediately follows the address, obviously has special reference to the character of God the Father. The second petition definitely involves the

Furthermore, the *Lord's Prayer*, in its second group of petitions, adequately represents the needs of Man. In the last analysis, the needs of Man are three in number. The first need is for food. The physical foundation of life must be maintained. God's provision for that need is covered in the first of these petitions: "Give us this day our daily bread." This petition asks not for luxuries, but for the necessary support of physical life: for God's care considers temporal good as a thing to be used.

The next need of Man is for mercy. This need is spiritual. It looks toward the past, which can only be laid in the hands of God. For this need God has provided forgiveness; but He made that forgiveness conditional. "And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." This solemn petition fortifies the sincerity of this Prayer, because the one who thus prays has assumed a responsibility that may turn the Prayer itself into a divine judgment.

The remaining need of life is for special grace. This need also is spiritual. It looks toward the future, where there are dangers from error and moral weakness, however good the intentions of life may be. Against this need of life, God has set up the last petition of this Prayer: "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." This petition asks for right guidance, and for the defensive powers of resisting grace. Life was lined up, in the first part of this Prayer, with the positive interests of righteousness. Hence, if the purposes of the Prayer were otherwise carried out, there would be need at this point to pray only for protection against error, and against the seductions of evil that lead men astray.

Support of life's energies for to-day, mercy for the failures of yesterday, and grace as a safe-guard for to-morrow, are the things prayed for in the second group of petitions in the *Lord's Prayer*. These needs are fundamental to life, and comprehensive.

3. Renewed Allegiance to God in Prayer

The things here prayed for are all to be thought of as means for the accomplishment of the things prayed for in the first group of petitions. This truth is clearly indicated in the use of the word *For* as an introduction to the thought of the last sentence in the Prayer. Man prays for these human

world-wide personal acceptance of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The third petition points directly to the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit, Who enlightens the souls of men respecting the Laws of God, and prompts their hearts in obedience to His will.

needs in order that he may attain the ideals prayed for in the first petitions of this Prayer.⁵

Hence it is that the *Lord's Prayer* comes to a conclusion at the right point exactly. It ends at the point of renewed allegiance to God. "For Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, for ever. Amen." These words express adequately the final and effective argument of all prayer. To render these rights of the Lord fully to Him, is to make all true prayer answerable. These last words mean that the one who has prayed this Prayer has here re-dedicated his whole life, enriched with the blessings prayed for in this Prayer, to the service and the glory of God. When the seal of an *Amen* is added to these last words of the *Lord's Prayer*, life is left completely in the hands of God for the accomplishment of His Divine purposes in time and in eternity.

By way of comment on this Prayer, Christ added a note of emphasis upon the spirit of prayer. He who prays must be sincere and consistent. If he would receive

4. Final Spirit of Prayer

Matthew 6:14-15

forgiveness, he must forgive. The truth here involved has a broader application. If a man would be blessed, he must be a bless-

ing. There is good reason to doubt whether a man has a right ever to ask for a blessing to stop on himself. Certainly a man may not have the benefits of Divine mercy, if he is not willing to show mercy to his fellowmen. Neither can a man worship God acceptably, unless that man have in his heart the love that impels to forgiveness. That is Christ's ultimatum on prayer. To come before God with an unforgiving spirit is presumption and mockery, a contradiction of all that enter into an acceptable and an answerable prayer.

3. *The Law Regulating Religious Fasting.* From those words of final warning with respect to prayer, Christ turned to the third

"Israel Were Assembled with Fasting, and with Sackclothes"

Nehemiah 9:1-3

Matthew 6:16-18

cf. Psalm 35:13

and is not unknown to-day.

and last Form of Worship considered in this Sermon. This Form of Worship was Fasting, a religious service in which there was an abstaining from food temporarily for the purpose of intensifying humility and supplication before God. This mode of worship was common in Bible times,

⁵There is a question whether a man may pray the second group of petitions in this *Lord's Prayer*, except with reference to the first group. The whole Prayer stands together; and there is a question whether a man may pray any of it unless he sincerely prays all of it, and prays it as it is logically built together by the Lord Himself.

Fasting, like all other Forms of Worship, must be sincere. But Fasting was, in Christ's day, a custom much abused. Even the absurdity of the situation did not deter men

1. Common Practice in Fasting from making a parade of the outward signs of Fasting. Solemn countenances, wry faces, and hungry looks bespoke the sad depths of hypocrisy in which this type of religious performance was carried on in those days. Such practices were, as a matter of course, addressed merely to the gaze of men, and done only for the sake of applause. Those who thus fasted, *to be seen of men*, had the results which were sought—those results, and no more.

But real Fasting is a spiritual act. It takes place deep in the secret heart, where it is seen only by the searching eye of God.

2. Proper Method of Fasting The man who truly fasts never advertises the fact. To avoid that objectionable result, he assumes his natural appearance, and goes on, as far as possible, in his natural way of life. His supreme desire is to fast in secret before God, and thereby to secure the spiritual benefits that arise from closer spiritual touch with God. That is the end and purpose of right Fasting.

The soul that thus humbly waits before God is certain to be recognized by Him. It is certain also to receive a recompense from the Father in Heaven. God never fails to see and to reward truth and sincerity in the heart of Man. With that assurance Christ closed His discussion of the outward Forms of Worship, and the Laws by which the Forms of Worship are to be regulated. In the Lord's thought always, a first essential in all worship is that spirit of sincerity in which a man must come into the presence of the Lord: for without that spirit no worship can be acceptable to God.

(C) The Laws of Complete Devotion to God and to His Son

When Christ had completed His analysis of the Laws that regulate the external Forms of Worship, He took up at once a study of the inner fact of Love as the supreme duty of Man toward God. In this part of His Sermon, Christ set forth the Laws that require and regulate the complete devotion of the heart to God and to His Son, Who is the Source of all spiritual life. This Law of Complete Devotion, as is confirmed by the marginal reference above, was written into the foundations of Man's relations to God. Christ

"Thou Shalt Love the Lord Thy God with All Thine Heart"

Deut. 6:5

Matthew 6:19-34

cf. Luke 11:34-36, and 12:22-31

only amplified the inner meaning of the Old Law on this subject, and made it very clear that all citizenship in His Kingdom must exemplify a complete and profound devotion of the heart to God, and to His Son Jesus Christ.

The importance of this Law can scarcely be over estimated. It is the highest of all Laws. Absolute devotion to God is the inner substance of the greatest commandment, and also of the second: for such devotion is the inner principle of Man's relations to Man. Supreme love is a prerequisite of all worship of God. This devotion reaches back of other laws, to the basic attitudes, motives, and purposes of the heart, where all observance of laws is determined. The right attitude of the heart toward Christ is the foundation of His Kingdom in every heart. That alone gives vital values to the most careful conduct. That is the inspiration of all other laws. "If ye love Me," said the Lord Jesus, "ye will keep My commandments." The issues of the life are always out of the heart.

Men must have a supreme love for God, and for His Son Jesus Christ. This supreme Law of Complete Devotion, as analyzed by Christ on this occasion, touches life with an imperative at each of the following points of devotion, Love and Affection, Confidence, and Active Effort.

1. *The Law of Supreme Love to God and to His Son Jesus Christ.* Life must have, and life will have, a supreme love for some person, or some thing. That is the first principle of love. The Law of the Kingdom now under consideration requires that this first love of life, this supreme attachment of the heart, be the love of life for God and for His Son.

This Law requires supreme love to the Son, as well as to the Father. In this respect, they are inseparable. Christ is Lord, and Savior, and King, and Friend, and Judge of life. Toward Him there must be no division in the heart. "If ye love Me," He said, laying down the supreme condition. Love to Christ, and through Him to the Father, must be decisive, active, and exclusive. Singleness of heart is the underlying principle of all love to God. This concentration of the heart toward God is the thing that Christ required of all who would be citizens of His Kingdom.

The heart must be single and decisive in its devotion to the things of God, such as spiritual efforts and spiritual results in life; for what a man strives for most, that he loves most. This

**"No Man Can Serve
Two Masters"**
Matthew 6:19-24

law of the heart Christ stated in these words: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth; . . . but lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven: . . . for

1. Singleness of Love in the Object of Life where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also."

Matthew 6:19-21 God is a Spirit; and the man who loves

God supremely must have both heart and effort devoted to spiritual and permanent results. This is true, because love and effort are inseparable. What men love, that they work at; and what men work at, that they love. About this fundamental Law of Complete Devotion, Christ desired that His disciples should make no mistakes. Men cannot supremely love one thing, and mainly work at another: for where their treasures are, there will their hearts be also. The life that is supremely devoted to God and His Son spends life's energies mainly in pursuit of the things of the spirit-life that endure to the glory of God when the mere things of this life have all passed away. Love links the soul to God eternally, if that love is such love as Christ requires of all who would come into His Kingdom.

Single also must be the guiding principles of active life. "The lamp of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is the darkness!" The heart must love Truth, and not error. Truth alone is of God. Truth alone gives a consistent philosophy of life. Truth alone gives clear and safe guidance. Truth alone, consistently followed, prevents cross-purposes that are disastrous to life.

2. Singleness of Love in the Guiding Truth of Life That is the meaning of this figure of a single vision. When the eyes are diseased, or imperfect, so that the rays of light fall double upon the retina, vision is blurred, indefinite, and uncertain. So it is when truth and error are mingled in the mind. There is double moral vision, which leads to confusion of standards, cross-purposes, contradictions, and moral failure. Men must know the truth of Christ, love it always, and follow it with singleness of heart, if they would walk without danger, and arrive at a definite spiritual goal. Truth, like sincerity, is a basic Law in all of Man's relations to God.

So must the heart be single in its devotion to Christ. To Him alone life must be fully consecrated in love and service. A di-

vided heart is doomed. "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other." Love is a

3. Singleness of Love in Choosing a Master Cause that leads to service as an Effect. This relation of Cause and Effect is consistent always. It is unvarying in its operation. It is exclusive of all opposite devotions in the heart. "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon."

Such double service is impossible, by the very law of love and service. The heart must choose exclusively for the one or the other. There is no compromise, and no middle ground of neutrality. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with *all* thy heart, and with *all* thy soul, and with *all* thy mind, and with *all* thy strength. This is the great and first commandment." This Law of Love requires a complete devotion of the whole man to God.

"No man can serve two masters." The thing is impossible; because the Law of Christ requires whole-hearted devotion to God, such as bends all the energies of life toward Him. Man must seek, in all of his efforts, to enrich his life in spiritual things. He must have, on the intellectual side of love, a clear-seeing philosophy of life, that will guide all efforts aright and safeguard them by truth. He must have, deep in his heart, a love for God, exclusive and supreme, that chooses only the path of truth, and walks only in the way of righteousness. A heart that is single in these particulars issues into a life that is both consistent and complete in its love to God, and to His Son Jesus Christ the Savior.

2. The Law of Complete Confidence in God and in His Son Jesus Christ. Complete devotion to God requires also a perfect confidence in Him and in His Son Jesus Christ. At this point the obligations to Christ Himself are particularly strong. He is the appointed Lord and King over all things. The first obligation of love exalts Christ as the accepted Lord of life, to Whom all faith, and love, and obedience are due. This obligation of confidence exalts Christ as the Providential King and Ruler of all things, Who may be fully trusted for all goodness, because His love and grace will never fail.

That is the Law of Complete Confidence. In discussing this obligation of life, Christ presented His thought in three parts. He gave a Commandment concerning this responsibility. He set forth the reasons for trusting God. He defined Man's right atti-

"The Lord Is My Shepherd; I Shall not Want"
Matthew 6:25-32
cf. Luke 12:22-31

tude toward temporal goodness. In all of these points, Christ defined both the duty and the privilege of full confidence in the Goodness of God.

Christ commanded confidence in God. "Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for

**1. Command to
Trust in Divine
Goodness
Matthew 6:25**

your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than the food, and the body than the raiment?" The life of the Christian is committed to Christ. The redeemed life of the Christian is inseparably interwoven with

the mission, and glory, and destiny of Christ. Through Him the plans and purposes of God are effectually carried out. The goodness of the Father, and of His Son, cannot fail.

Christ is King. With Him there is authority and power over all things. Through Him is given every good gift and every perfect gift that comes from the Father of Lights. God gave His Son as a means of life and blessedness. Christ gave Himself freely for the same purpose. He that has Christ needs not to fear for the smaller gifts of life. With Him God shall freely give all things. The gift of the Greater is the security of all other.

This philosophy of life belongs to the Christian. Such confidence have all they who put their trust in the Son of God. The labor of the Christian is free from anxiety, or at least it should be so. The connection of the believer with Christ gives a guarantee of goodness that cannot fail. Complete confidence in God and in His Son is therefore rightly commanded. This duty, growing out of faith and love, none can escape.

Yet Christ went beyond the mere command, and gave good reasons for Man's implicit trust in Divine Goodness. In giving

**2. Reasons for
Trust in Divine
Goodness
Matthew 6:26-30**

these reasons, however, Christ confined His thought to the fundamental necessities of life. He considered only food and clothing. Christ did not think of making men rich, as the world counts riches. He thought only of

meeting the needs of a life that is devoted to service, and not of a life that is lived only for the multitude of things that it may possess. God's favor has never failed men or things that fulfill their divine appointment in the world. This truth Christ illustrated by reference to the birds and the flowers. In their life-story under the hand of God, Christ found a strong argument for Man's confidence in God's goodness touching the necessities of life, such as food and clothing.

For Food, the righteous may trust the Lord; for His goodness

is ample for all their needs. The birds of the air fulfill their simple mission, and God feeds them. Certainly He will not fail

to care for Man, if he fulfills his mission of higher value in the world. That was Christ's first reason for trusting the goodness of God. It works without failure, if Man makes good the conditions of that goodness.

(1) **God's Goodness Ample and Secure When Life's Mission is Fulfilled**

The problem of Divine Goodness is not with God. The cattle on a thousand hills are His. The very laws by which food is produced are His, and under His sovereign administration. He makes things work together for good to them who, through love and active faith, work with Him. The problem is simply one of Man's linking himself rightly with God, in a mission of value in life. Those who thus work with God may exchange their anxiety in life for a full confidence in the goodness of the Father in Heaven.⁶

For Food, men *must* trust the Lord. There really is no alternative. "And who of you," said Christ, "by being anxious can add one cubit unto his stature?" Anxiety

(2) **Man's Dependence on God a Necessity**

cannot do any good. That is one truth. But there is another truth in these words of the Son of God. In effect, He said, "Apart from Me, ye can do nothing." Christ is the Divine Administrator of all things. Life itself, and all that supports life, is in His hands. In the deeper sense, Christ cannot be ignored.

Man must depend upon God, and upon His Royal Son, Who administers and rules the world. In the production, and transportation, and use of foods, Man must depend upon God, Whose Laws of chemistry and physics, of matter and force, of nutrition and life itself, must be recognized and utilized. In the wisdom of His purposes, God sends His rain upon the just and the unjust. But if He should withdraw the operation of His laws from the world for one moment, all things would become an instant chaos.

Without God, Man would be utterly helpless. Of himself, Man cannot cause food to grow; neither could he use food so as to grow himself. In that condition, Man would remain for ever an infant, if indeed he were anything at all. The infant would remain for ever an infant. He could not add one cubit to his stature. That is what Christ meant. Even physical life itself is entirely dependent upon God.

But the Laws of God do not fail. Nor do men, as a matter of

⁶Compare *Psalms* 24:1; 65:9-13; *Romans* 8:28, 32; and *Exodus* 9:29.

fact, fail to depend upon them, and so also upon Him. The irony of fate is that the most miserly Mammon worshipper must depend upon God, even upon the God Whom the miser scorns to recognize and to love and serve. The root of all evil is that men selfishly live as parasites on the goodness of Heaven. The astonishing question of the ages is this, "Will a man rob God?" Christ here calls upon men to see what they must do, and are doing, and then to make their recognition of God consistent and effective by making it full and complete.⁷

For Food every man should render to God a life that is Christian. That is what Christ meant when He used a *Therefore* to

**(3) Faith, and Love
to God, Alone Make
Life Consistent**

connect this duty and privilege of confidence with the previous duty of a supreme devotion to God. "No man can serve two masters.

. . . . Therefore take no thought, etc." Too many people ungratefully plunder the goodness of God. Instead of that, they should nobly respond to this call of Christ. Christian devotion and confidence alone can make a life consistent. These alone make life honest with God, and worthy of Man.

Growing out of these suggestions, there are two facts that should challenge men to thoughtful attention. The first is this. Without the goodness of God expressed in His Natural Laws, all men would be helpless. The second fact is like the first. Without observing the wisdom and the righteousness of God's Moral Laws, no nation on earth, in a civilized state of society, has ever been able to feed its people.

These two facts argue one conclusion. Man must co-operate with God in dependence upon Him. Common gratitude and consistency both demand that life be completely co-ordinated with God by faith and love and service. For this deeper ennobling consistency of life, Christ made His strong appeal through this argument for confidence in the never failing goodness of God. For that result Christ appealed through the common necessity for food.

For Clothing, Christ demanded the same exalted response. The argument is the same, except that the thought here is more

**(4) Relation of
God's Goodness to
Man's Immortality**

definitely related to the immortal destiny of Man. Anxiety for clothing is unnecessary, and in vain. "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow," said the Lord. They fulfill

their mission, and God cares for them. More than that is true.

⁷See I. Timothy 6:10; and Malachi 3:8.

He glorifies them for and in their mission, which is only a moment of glory, and then they fade away. "Shall He not much more clothe you," whose lives, whose mission, and whose destiny, are linked with things eternal, even His own eternal glory? "O ye of little faith!"

Christ wanted men to see, and to act upon two great truths. First, God may be fully trusted. His goodness is ample, and it never fails. Second, God's primary concern always, even in the bestowing of temporal goodness, is to save and bless the souls of men. God would bless men here and now, that they might now and for ever live to His glory, and might have the deeper joys of an abiding fellowship with Him. Blessings should lead to salvation, through a grateful faith in Christ; and salvation should lead to an eternal blessedness in the service of God.

Christ desired to have no confusion of thought, misguidance, and failures, in the attainment of these exalted ends of life.

**3. Right Attitude
Toward Temporal
Necessities and
God's Goodness
Matthew 6:31-32**

Therefore He formally defined the right attitude of Man toward the temporal necessities of life and the goodness of God. Christ gave, in this summarizing statement, the deeper meaning of one's attitude toward the goodness that Heaven bestows upon men.

Christ also gave a word of warning and of refreshing assurance.

On the negative side of this duty, Christ sounded a note of warning. "Be not therefore anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?'

**(1) Danger of
Unbelief**

or, 'What shall we drink?' or, 'Wherewithal shall we be clothed?' For after all these things do the Gentiles seek." Christ would, therefore, rule out all anxiety. It has no

place in the mind and heart of the Christian: for anxiety, in this sense at least, is a sign of unbelief. It marks the pagan attitude of one who knows not the true nature of God. It signifies an ignorance of the Heavenly Father's loving care of all His children. "Be not therefore anxious." That is the law of confidence on its negative side.

On the positive side of this law, Christ gave Divine encouragement. The law requires the Christian to have an implicit faith

**(2) Assurance of
God's Loving
Care**

in the goodness of God. The Christian must believe in the Love, the Knowledge, the Wisdom, and the Care of God as respects the welfare of His children. That attitude of

faith the Christian must have. To him, however, Christ gave this final assurance: "For your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye

have need of all these things." Thus Christ, by proper confidence in the goodness of God, would remove anxiety for temporal needs from the lives of men, and thereby free their energies for supreme devotion to God and to the spiritual interests of life.

3. *The Law of Loyal Effort for the Kingdom of Christ.* As the last of Man's duties toward God, Christ set forth the require-

**"Godliness Is
Profitable unto All
Things"**

1. Timothy 4:8

Matthew 6:33-34

cf. Luke 12:31-32

ment of a loyal effort for the advancement of Christ's Kingdom of Righteousness in the world. Affection, confidence, and effort.

These constitute the triangle of devotion to God which must characterize the citizen of Christ's Kingdom. Love, Faith, and Works.

This triangle is familiar in all Christian experience. The Love looks up to God. The Faith sees God's assured goodness sent down to men. In the Works, Love spends the Blessings of Goodness in exalting the glory of God, and in extending the blessed Kingdom of His Son in the hearts of men. The Laws of Love and of Confidence are completed in the Law of Loyal Effort for the Kingdom of Christ.

Christian loyalty is devoted to spiritual ends, thereby being in contrast with pagan worldliness. Christ said, "But seek ye first

**1. Spiritual Object
of Loyal Effort**
Matthew 6:33a

His Kingdom, and His righteousness." This objective and standard of Christian effort has several applications in common life. For

the worldly man, who is outside of the Kingdom and cares not for spiritual interests, this Law means that he should face about in his whole life, and seek the Kingdom of God, and a life of vital righteousness.

For the Christian personally, this Law requires an effort to build up the Kingdom of Christ within his own heart. For the Christian as a citizen of the Kingdom, this Law means the loyal effort of life to extend the Kingdom into hearts that do not now have that blessedness. For all men, this Law means that the end of all effort is righteousness, not formal conformity to the outward standards of the Kingdom, but vital faith and love expressed in a Christ-like life of service.

Such efforts alone rightly correlate the several interests of life, giving the spiritual its proper place above the temporal. When

**2. Divine Assurance
in Loyal Effort**
Matthew 6:33b

that is done effectively, there is a Divine assurance that the temporal needs of life shall be supplied. Christ said, with commanding authority, "But seek ye first His Kingdom,

and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto

you." The Son of God was here speaking of food and clothing, and other temporal necessities of life.

This Law of Loyal Effort operates faithfully, fulfilling its assurance: for the man who sincerely seeks the spiritual first has already placed himself in position to receive what God has to give. This is true through the co-operation with God in the administration of His Natural and Moral Laws in the world. It is also true in respect to His special providences over the lives of men.

If this Law of Loyal Effort for the Kingdom of Christ and His righteousness were fulfilled in its ideal perfection, there would be no want in all the world. Sin, with its consequences of ignorance and selfishness, is parent cause of all distress. This is true respecting the common necessities of life. If God's blessings were fully put to use, and if the spirit of Jesus Christ were universally operative, people would rarely want the necessities of life, nor would they be allowed to suffer from such want. The world suffers mainly because of its unused moral and spiritual resources. This final Law of Devotion to God rightly coordinates the economical, the educational, and the spiritual problems of life: for it lifts the world to that consecrated plane of effort where all their wants shall be supplied.

The outlook with which this part of the Sermon on the Mount closes is filled with calm assurance. Christ said, "Be not therefore anxious for the morrow: for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." To-morrow may seem to have its cares in waiting. But to-day, for the Christian, is secure in the favor of God; and so will to-morrow be when it has come. The first duty is to be Christian, and to strive for Christian ideals. Therein is security. The soul has calm repose that seeks first the Kingdom of Christ and His righteousness.

**3. Calm Outlook
for Loyal Effort
Matthew 6:34**

Thus Christ set forth Man's duty toward God, in these Laws of Worship and Devotion. First, Christ laid down the general principle of sincerity as a condition that is necessary in all manner of approach to God. After this, Christ analyzed the Laws that regulate the external Forms of Worship,—Alms-Giving, Prayer, and Fasting. Finally, He defined the inner spirit of all right relations with God. That inner spirit is one of complete devotion to the Father and to His Son, in a life of love, and confidence, and loyal effort for the things of Christ.

In all of His discussion of this part of the Law of His King-

dom, Christ has wrought out one high and ennobling conception of the relation of Man to God. It is this: That Man meets his full responsibility only when he has an abiding Faith that God will be faithful, and a Love for God and Man that throws life, with loyal effort and full consecration, into the services of God. Such a conception leads logically to the thought of effective living, which Christ considered in the remaining part of this Sermon on the Mount.

CHAPTER X

THE KINGDOM: THE LAWS AND TESTS OF EFFECTIVE LIVING

"Work out your salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God that worketh in you." *Philippians 2:12-13.*

"Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. *Galatians 5:16, 22, 23.*

"Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be My disciples." *John 15:8.*

The substance of this chapter is intimately personal.¹ As already seen in previous chapters, the organizing of Christ's Kingdom included four things. The first of these was the choosing of the Twelve Apostles, and the dedication of them to their special work. The other three things were accomplished by the Lord in this Sermon on the Mount. These three things were, the definition of Citizenship in the Kingdom, the exposition of the Law of the Kingdom, and the description of the Tests of the Kingdom. The subject of Citizenship, and the larger part of the Law, have been studied in previous chapters. The remaining portion of the Law, and the Tests of the Kingdom, will be studied in this chapter.

The general subject of Law, as set forth in the Sermon on the Mount, is being studied under four main divisions. Three of these have been considered: the Laws of Law itself, or the status of the Ancient Law; the duties of Man to Man; and the duties of Man to God. Under all of those divisions of the Law, Christ dealt with the principles that applied to the fundamental relationships of life within His Kingdom. But there still remains a group of special principles which He laid down, apparently for the particular and practical guidance of individual life and conduct. These last principles, since they are related to the fundamental Laws already studied, may rightly be called the *By-Laws* of the Kingdom. However, they are here grouped as the fourth general division of the Law of the Kingdom, and will be studied under the following outline.

¹Such Scriptures as those at the head of this chapter might be richly multiplied. Compare 1. *John* 3:1-3; *Philippians* 4:5; and 4:8; 1. *John* 4:11; *Romans* 12:11, 21; 1. *John* 2:6; *Philippians* 1:10-11; 2. *Peter* 1:4-11; and *Jude* 20-21.

IV. The Laws of Effective Life and Service

In Christ's general discussion of the Law, His first group of Laws were related to Law itself; the second group, to Man's duty to Man; and the third, to Man's duty to God. This fourth group of Laws is concerned largely with Man's duty to himself. These Laws show how a man should regulate his own life so that he may have all the advantages of being capable within himself, and of becoming thereby an effective citizen in the Kingdom of Christ.

1. *The Law of Right Social Attitude: the Suspension of Judgment.* The first Law which Christ prescribed for regulating the personal life of the individual was that which requires a right social attitude between Man and Man. This Law calls for a suspension of critical judgment respecting other persons. Christ said, "Judge not, that ye be not judged." This Law is important because it

provides for self-defense, and for maintaining open attitudes for service to others. The underlying principle of this regulation is, that men get out of life just what they put into life. "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."

The world is generous, as Luke, in his account of this argument, has emphasized; but the world is also exacting in its judgments and rewards. The individual is the architect of his own destiny in the minds and hearts of men. This Law applies alike to the restraints of life, and to the positive services. Always there is a reflex, or a recoil. Christ placed this law, because of its importance, first among these regulations of an effective citizenship. Suspended judgment keeps a man in an attitude to serve, and also keeps the channels of service open between Man and Man.

2. *The Law of Education: Preparation and Fitness for Service.* The second Law of effective living is concerned with education. Christ insisted that a man should be prepared for the service which he desired to render. In stating this Law of Education, Christ touched upon both the intellectual and the moral sides of life. The citizens of His Kingdom, both as servants and as leaders in spiritual things, must prepare themselves for their places and work.

Christ did not prescribe college graduation, nor indeed did He

"Study To Show
Thyself Approved
unto God"

2. Timothy 2:15

Matthew 7:1-27

Luke 6:37-49

"Let Brotherly
Love Continue"

Hebrews 13:1

Matthew 7:1-2

Luke 6:37-38

"Take Heed unto
Thyself, and unto
the Doctrine"

1. Timothy 4:16

Matthew 7:3-5

Luke 6:39-42

outline any particular standard of curriculum attainment. His Law of Education, however, is definite, practical, and generous. Christ did not even suggest that the lack of ordinary schooling should prevent a person from service. Certainly He did not do that. But He did insist that a man must be prepared in mind and heart for serving others. A citizen of the Kingdom must know the truth by which he would guide others, and he must first practice that truth in his own heart and life. Paul stated this Law in these words: "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."

Christ, defining this Law on the side of its intellectual application, declared that His disciples and servants must know the truth.

**1. Necessity for
Knowing the Truth
Luke 6:39-40**

He put the matter in strong language: "Can the blind guide the blind? Shall they not both fall into the pit?" Lack of knowledge on the part of leaders brings disaster. This also is true, as Christ here pointed out: the measure of true knowledge there is in those who lead is the measure also of their possibilities of service. "The disciple is not above his teacher: but every one when he is perfected shall be as his teacher."

In the nature of the case this is true. No man can teach beyond what he knows: he can teach only so far as he knows, if haply he can do that. No man can lift another above his own level of attainment. Spiritual leaders, having a superior knowledge and experience of the truth, must work on the God-ward side of those whom they would instruct and guide in the way of righteousness. This law, which applies to all common Christian service, is susceptible of unlimited application in the general field of intellectual effort. But this Law, however wide its application, can never get away from its true religious significance: for all truth is of God. The spiritual insistence of this Law rightly extends to all right efforts of study and research to know all the facts and truths whereby God has conditioned the lives of men, and their services to Him and to their fellowmen.

On the moral side of life, Christ insisted that this Law of Education required the attainment of character as a necessary prerequisite of effective service. There must be

**2. Necessity for
Living the Truth
Matthew 7:3-5
Luke 6:41-42**

a moral consistency between what a man is and what he would help others to become. A man should first embody in his own life the truth which he would successfully apply to others. "Cast out first the beam out of thine own eye; and

then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye." That is the law of higher moral attainment on the part of those who would help others in the way of moral attainment.

Self-examination and self-attainment are necessary conditions of service. Thus a man qualifies himself for serving. Furthermore, the opposite of moral consistency is hypocrisy; and that, wherever it exists, is always obvious enough to discount all efforts on the part of those who are inconsistent. Man must take first heed to himself. This truth Christ solemnly emphasized through the relative size of the *beam* and the *mote*, in His concrete statement of this Law of Moral Education. Such preparation of one's own life is necessary for effective service in the Kingdom of Christ.

3. *The Laws of Wealth: Its Right Evaluation and Use.* The third Law of Effective Living is concerned with the things of life.

"The Earth Is the Lord's, and the Fulness Thereof"
 Psalm 24:1
 Matthew 7:6

This Law requires the right evaluation and right use of material wealth. "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast your pearls before swine, lest haply they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you." This Law of Wealth, with its impressive warning, has a wide application in life.

This Law forbids the misuse of wealth: for wealth is sacred. "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast your pearls before swine." The first underlying

1. Misuse of Wealth Strongly Forbidden

truth of this Law is, that all wealth is, in a very real sense, consecrated wealth. All wealth belongs to the Lord. That truth must be reckoned with, though men do not always act as if they realized that truth. Furthermore, all wealth, in whatever form of possession, if honestly acquired (and perhaps equally so if dishonestly acquired), has its value, in the last analysis, in terms of human life. "The substance of a diligent men is precious." This also is fundamental: that material wealth, as it is rightly conceived by the Christian, is only a support to the higher life that is devoted to service.²

The man of noble worth, and of power in the world, knows the value of *things*, and devotes them to their right purposes in life. He makes material wealth a servant, and not a master, in the progress of his own life-plans. He makes a right evaluation of the treasures that he may possess. He exercises a sane judgment

²See *Proverbs* 12:27. Compare also *Psalms* 62:10; and 112:1-10, which describes the secret of true prosperity in life.

in respect to all expenditures. He has a consecration of soul that determines his attitude toward the use of money. He recognizes and observes the sacredness there is in wealth. He has a just regard for this Law of Christ's Kingdom, knowing that the duties enjoined under this Law do work together to ennoble life, and to make it more effective.

This Law also warns men against the dangers of misusing wealth. "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast your pearls before swine, lest haply they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you." The sin of waste, and the disastrous recoil of misused wealth, are both emphatic in this solemn warning. Since wealth is from God, to misuse it is to sin against Him. Since wealth represents life invested, to misuse it is to squander life itself, which should be conserved for higher purposes. For these reasons, the wasting of wealth recoils disastrously upon life, even if there were no evils purchased with the money that is misspent. The sin of waste is a profound spiritual evil. It discounts life, and discredits its nobler usefulness. The miserly spirit is always mean and degrading.

Extravagance is equally contemptible and sinful, because it is equally selfish. But thrift is noble in any man, perhaps the nobler the more of wealth one may command. Economy is one of Heaven's Laws. These virtues of life have the sanction of Divine example. There is something uplifting always in that attitude toward wealth which carefully counts the value of every dollar, and dime too, before it is spent. The effective life must carefully conserve, and with equal care expend, that which finds its right purpose only in supporting a life that is devoted to the service of God and the world of need.

Work is God's Law for all men. This also is involved in the Law of Wealth. From the beginning, God intended that Man should conquer, possess, control, use, and enjoy the world of material things. God commands work. Sloth is a sin; for work is service to God. Work requires diligence of the mind and the spirit, as well as of the hands; for such diligence is a part of the First and Great Commandment. God does not intend that there should be any parasites in the economic world, who live off of society without work. Neither does God allow work, or its results of wealth, to be misused for personal or social advantages to the detriment of other people. And for all

their work, or the sinful want of it, God will hold all men to strict account.³

The Source of riches and honor is God, from Whom comes every good and perfect gift. The human condition of wealth is diligence in the work of life. Diligence, as an element of the Christian life, is co-ordinated with such virtues as faith, and love, and knowledge. Diligence is also a source of legitimate preferment in life, and also a safeguard to the moral integrity of life. The natural result of most work is some measure of material wealth; but the real enjoyment of such wealth depends always upon certain moral and spiritual principles being wrought into life itself.⁴

Because of the dangers involved in the ambition to attain wealth, Christ carefully warned men against supposing that life consists in the abundance of the things that a man may possess. Trust in material wealth is forbidden; because riches, in themselves, are very uncertain. Besides, a concern for material wealth as an end in itself is fraught with great spiritual dangers, which may become almost unsurmountable. But honest work, and the rewards thereof, are conditions of good influence in life. The highest argument for acquiring wealth is that one may use it in service, and as a means of attaining the higher blessedness of giving. The real wealth of life is not material, but is the spiritual; and for that a man should strive with the suprême effort of his life.⁵

4. *The Law of Confidence in Prayer.* The fourth Law of Effective Living commands confidence in prayer. The citizen of Christ's Kingdom must pray concerning the higher life, and all

³On the several propositions in this paragraph, in regular order beginning with the third sentence, see the following Scripture references. (1) *Genesis* 1:26-31. (2) *Exodus* 20:9; *Deuteronomy* 5:13; *Luke* 13:14; *James* 2:26; *Philippians* 2:12; *1. Thessalonians* 4:11. (3) *Proverbs* 6:1-11; 10:1-5; *Romans* 12:11. (4) *Matthew* 22:37; *Deuteronomy* 6:4-7; *Matthew* 28:19-20; *Galatians* 6:6; *1. Timothy* 3:16; *2. Timothy* 2:15; *Acts* 17:11; *Proverbs* 10:4. (5) *1. Thessalonians* 4:10-12; *2. Thessalonians* 3:10-12; *Proverbs* 10:4-5; 19:15. (6) *Job* 31:16-25; *Proverbs* 14:20-21; 18:23; *Matthew* 23:14, 23; *Luke* 12:19. (7) *Ecclesiastes* 12:13-14; *Jeremiah* 50:29; *Micah* 2:1; *Matthew* 25:34-45; *Romans* 14:11-12; *1. Corinthians* 3:13-15; *2. Corinthians* 5:10; *Galatians* 6:7-9; *1. Peter* 4:3-6; *Revelation* 20:12; 22:12.

⁴In the same manner, on the several propositions of this paragraph, see the following references. (1) *1. Chronicles* 29:10-19; *Psalms* 37:21-27; *Proverbs* 3:16; 8:18; 10:22; *Luke* 12:13-40; *James* 1:17. (2) *Proverbs* 11:27; 13:4; 4:5; 27:23. (3) *Proverbs* 12:24; *Romans* 12:8; *2. Corinthians* 8:7; *1. Peter* 1:5-8. (4) *Proverbs* 22:29. (5) *Proverbs* 10:2-4; 15:16; *Psalms* 1:1-6; 37:16; 112:1-3; *Jeremiah* 17:9-11; *Matthew* 6:33; *Psalms* 23:1-6; *1. Timothy* 6:6; *Hebrews* 13:5.

⁵As in the previous notes 3 and 4, see, (1) *1. Samuel* 16:7; *Luke* 12:15; *John* 7:24; *2. Corinthians* 10:7. (2) *Psalms* 62:10; *Proverbs* 23:5; 27:24; *Luke* 12:15-21. (3) *1. Timothy* 6:6-10; *Luke* 12:13-31; 16:13; 18:18-30; *Mark* 10:24. Compare also *John* 3:21; *Psalms* 49:17; *Proverbs* 11:4; *Jeremiah* 9:23; *Matthew* 13:22; *Luke* 6:24; *Proverbs* 15:27; *Deuteronomy* 16:19. (4) *Acts* 6:3; *Romans* 12:17; *2. Corinthians* 8:21; *1. Thessalonians* 4:10-12; *1. Timothy* 3:7; *1. Peter* 2:12; *Matthew* 5:10-12, 16. (5) *Malachi* 3:8-12; *Acts* 20:35; *Ephesians* 4:28. (6) *Matthew* 6:19-34; *Mark* 8:34-38; *2. Corinthians* 8:9; *Luke* 16:11; *Romans* 2:4; 9:23; 10:12; 11:33-36; *Ephesians* 1:7; *Colossians* 3:15-17; *1. Timothy* 6:17-19.

of its activities. But that citizen must also, back of his praying, fulfill certain conditions that make for confidence in the effectiveness of his prayers. This Law of Confidence in Prayer is a composite requirement. Therefore, in His statement of this Law, Christ set forth three things: first, certain general principles of prayer; second, the basis of confidence in prayer; and third, the moral responsibilities of those who pray.

"For All the Promises of God in Him Are Yea, and in Him Amen, unto the Glory of God by Us"
 2. Corinthians 1:20
 Matthew 7:7-12

Christ began His statement of the general principles of prayer with a direct command. "Ask . . . seek . . . knock." Obedience to this three-fold command is encouraged by a three-fold assurance. The Lord Himself said, "It shall be given . . . found . . . and . . . opened unto you." Men

1. General Principles of Prayer
 Matthew 7:7-8

ask when the conditions are full of promise. They *seek* when the situation of life is more difficult. They can only stand and *knock* when circumstances are extreme, and results seem uncertain. But over all the conditions of life there is an arc of hope in the universality of prayer. The door of prayer is open to all who will really pray, under all conditions of life. "For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." These are the general principles in terms of which the Lord Jesus Christ defined the blessed privilege of prayer.

Christ next stated the basis of confidence in prayer. That basis is in the Character of God Himself. This truth is simple in statement, but sublime in meaning. It is a truth which Christ would have all men fully understand. Belief in prayer is only belief in the love, and in the essential goodness, of the Heavenly Father. Of course, prayer must be made in the Name of Christ, and with sincerity in the heart; but the basis of confidence in all prayer is the Character of God, Whose love and mercy and goodness cause Him to bless with delight wherever it is possible.

2. Basis of Confidence in Prayer
 Matthew 7:9-11

This truth of prayer Christ illustrated by comparing the response of God to that of a father when his child has asked for bread, or a fish. All the world knows that the father's love will determine his answer, prompting him to give what his child has asked. The father's love will suggest goodness always for the child. He will therefore give the bread, or the fish, and not a useless stone, or an injurious serpent.

So it is with the Father in Heaven: only it is more so, since He is *perfect* in character, and love, and action. In Him perfect love, and perfect goodness, combine to give assurance in prayer. Therefore the effective man must pray. Therefore, also, the effective man must pray, and does pray, with full faith in the love of God, and in His consequent goodness.

Men who rightly pray may pray with confidence. But there are certain moral obligations which men must meet when they pray. This part of the Law is expressed in the Golden Rule. "All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them: for this is the Law and the Prophets." This summarizing principle of all standards and all efforts for righteousness must be active in all hearts that rightly pray. To appear before God in prayer, without the spirit of this Rule of Life in the heart, would be great presumption in any man.

The Golden Rule was here given by Christ as a condition of prayer. That fact should not be forgotten. By a formal *therefore* Christ presented the Golden Rule as the necessary duty of him who would have an effective praying life. Thus again Christ brought out clearly the circle of prayer, which is always a gracious privilege, unless men make it otherwise. The basis of assurance in prayer rests in the Character of God; but the results of prayer depend upon an answering divineness in Man. It is only "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man (that) availeth much."⁶

5. *The Law of Diligent Effort.* Finally, an effective life, as defined by Christ in these Laws of the Kingdom, must be a life full of earnest effort. Idleness and indolence have no place in the Kingdom of Righteousness, wherein men must *strive* for spiritual attainment. "Enter ye in by the narrow gate." That is the word of Christ, as recorded by Matthew. Luke has given the more emphatic statement. "*Strive* to enter in by the narrow door: for many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able." That is the Law of Diligent Effort in the Kingdom of Christ.

The Lord Jesus gave two special reasons for this careful diligence on the part of the Christian. On the negative side, the

⁶See James 5:16; Galatians 6:7-10; 1. Thessalonians 5:15-18; and "The Laws of Prayer," as discussed above in Chapter IX.

gravity of life is too often downward. The road to ruin is easy. The end is certain. Yet the way is popular. "For wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction; and many there be that enter in thereby." Men must stem the downward tendency of life, whatever the efforts such a course may require.

Two Reasons for Diligent Effort

On the positive side, the road leads upward. There are difficulties, which careful effort alone can overcome. "For narrow is the gate, and straightened the way, that leadeth unto life; and few there be that find it." The upward road of the Christian is not an easy road. Christ said, "Ye shall be hated of all men for My Name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved." The Spirit has said to the churches, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the Tree of Life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God."⁷

With this comprehensive suggestion, which is full of hope and of warning, Christ closed His analysis of the Law of His Kingdom. In these Laws He has set forth the wisdom of God concerning life, and how to live it to the best advantages for time and eternity. From these Laws that regulate life at its best, Christ turned, in the final division of the Sermon on the Mount, to the Tests of the Kingdom, by which such life as He has described shall be fully and finally approved.

THE TESTS OF THE KINGDOM⁸

Throughout this Sermon Christ has presented the interests and ideals of His Kingdom from the standpoint of Man's personal and social well-being. Christ considered the consistent and complete self-realization of the individual in this highest sense to be exactly equivalent to his living for the glory of God. This view of the matter is correct; for Man was created in the image and likeness of God. The achievement of Man's best self, and of God's highest glory, result from the outworking of the same ideals of truth, and love, and service, in the lives of those who are Christian.

But truth in life calls for instruction. Love calls for inspiration. Service calls for guidance. Therefore teachers and leaders

⁷See *Matthew* 10:22; *Revelation* 2:7; and Notes 3, 4, and 5, above in this chapter.

⁸The process of organizing the Kingdom of Christ included two things: the choice of the Twelve Apostles, and the giving of the Constitution of the Kingdom, which was given in the Sermon on the Mount. This Constitution-Sermon set forth three great inner facts of the Kingdom: the Citizenship, the Laws, and the Tests. These are coordinate; and these Tests would be treated in a separate chapter, were the matter sufficiently extensive.

are necessary in the practical work of the Kingdom, and Christ has provided for them in this organization. The points of final emphasis in this Sermon touch the integrity of spiritual leadership, and the integrity of personal life. If Christ's exalted conceptions of life are to be realized, men must be rightly instructed, and rightly led in the way of life; and their own personal responses must be sincere, faithful, and active.

In order to secure these results, Christ prescribed two kinds of Tests within His Kingdom. The one was a Test for spiritual leaders, the other a Test for personal life. These two Tests, of Leadership and of Discipleship, are the safeguards of life's most precious and enduring interests.

I. The Tests of Leadership in the Kingdom of Christ

As a safeguard against false teachers and false leaders, Christ has provided that Leadership within His Kingdom shall be tested by the principles of fruit bearing. The tree is known by its fruits. Likewise, the false philosophies and false loves of men are seen in their lives and conduct. The same is true of truth and righteousness. Like will produce like. This is a law of nature, and also of grace, to which there are no exceptions. "By their fruits ye shall know them."

1. *The Test of Leadership Outlined by Christ.* Leaders shall be known by the moral and spiritual fruitage of their lives. Discussing these Tests, Christ began with a warning. "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves." The Lord pointed out here the greatest danger that lurks near to all sacred spiritual interests.

"Prove All Things"

1. **Thess. 5:21**

Matthew 7:15-19

Luke 6:43-44

cf. Matt. 12:31-37

The worst of all calamities is that an immortal soul should, by the wiles of seductive teachers, and by cunningly devised philosophies, be led away from God and truth, and into error and ruin.

God has graciously safeguarded the souls of men. Christ fortified His followers against the dangers of believing a lie, more perhaps than against any other danger of their lives. Paul had less patience with false teachers than with any other class of mischief-makers and evil-doers. The electric nature of the Apostle John flashed forth against false doctrines more powerfully than against any other form of sin. Such an attitude toward false leadership is necessary for two reasons. There is no possible compromise between Truth and Error. They are, in their very natures, mutually exclusive. Furthermore, the quality of

the present life, and the destiny of the soul in after-life, are both determined by whether a man has followed the Truth, or has been led astray into the devious and deceptive paths of Error.

Therefore Christ laid down a simple safeguard against false prophets, and false teachers. He found the principle of His Test

in the laws of nature. That principle is one

1. Law of Fruitage Stated that all men may understand well enough for effective application. It is this. "By their

fruits ye shall know them." That was the

Lord's simple Test. Like produces like. Men do not "gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles." That is the Law that never fails in Nature.

And this Law of Cause and Effect, for so it is, operates with equal certainty in spiritual life. "Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but the corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit." To this Law there are no possible exceptions. "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." Hence Christ said that the good and the evil, by this effective Test, should be recognized the one from the other, and that the evil should be rejected. "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." That was the end of evil trees that bear evil fruit.

Similar fate of outright rejection must be given to false prophets, who teach error, and lead men astray. "By their fruits

ye shall know them." Outward conduct is

2. Law of Fruitage Applied to Leaders the fruitage of the life and principles that are in the heart. The same is true of a man's eternal destiny. A man's faith, and his phil-

Matthew 7:20

Luke 6:45

osophy of life, express themselves, and also

show their moral and spiritual worth, in his daily life. The supreme love of the heart reveals itself in the daily attitudes and conduct of life.

This Law of Fruitage as applied to the moral and spiritual life is inflexible. "The good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth that which is evil: for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh."

This Law and Test of Fruitage, as applied to leadership in life, is fully justified by the last clause of the above quotation. Those

who lead have either the truth or the error

3. Law of Fruitage Justified first in their own hearts. They speak and

lead also from motives that are either sincere

or deceptive. But these things cannot be concealed. The fruitage

of life shows what really are the moving causes in the hearts of men. Christ therefore instructed His disciples to look through the outward conduct of men, to see what was in their hearts. He would have His disciples thus test the worth of men, to see how far their leadership was sincere and safe. He would have His disciples carefully accept or reject the doctrines and leadership of men according to this Law and Test of Fruitage in life.

2. *The Test of Leadership vs. the Law of Suspended Judgment.* This Test of Leadership is not at variance with the earlier requirement for a suspension of judgment. The earlier requirement was personal and social: this Test is official in nature. The suspension of judgment belongs to the expressive side of life: this Test of Leadership belongs to the receiving side. This latter is, therefore, a necessary safeguard to the former. The suspension of judgment is a necessary condition of effectiveness in serving others; but this searching Test of Leadership is a necessary self-protection in the preparation for such service.

Christ intends that His followers shall be instructed in the truth. He commands them faithfully, and provides for them safely, to follow the truth. He expects them to defend themselves by the truth. He warns them, with equal authority and goodness, that they shall not blindly follow those who would falsely lead immortal souls to eternal destruction.

Against the possibility of such calamity, Christ provided an effective safeguard, in the application of this simple Law of Fruitage in life. He prescribed the thoughtful critical attitude toward moral and spiritual leadership, with the right of definite final rejection of that leadership, if it failed to measure up to the true Christian standards either in fact or in quality. By this means shall a man protect himself from being led astray. And then, as if to secure the correct and adequate application of this protective principle, Christ laid down the searching tests to which the individual should subject his own personal life.

II. The Tests of Discipleship in the Kingdom of Christ

The effective life is one that is obedient and sincere. These are personal qualities, which need to be checked by carefully

"Faith That Worketh by Love"

Galatians 5:6

Matthew 7:21-27

Luke 6:46-49

applied personal tests, lest life become ineffective in itself and a failure before God.

Therefore Christ prescribed and illustrated these Tests of Discipleship, by which every person within the Kingdom, and all those who falsely suppose themselves to be within the Kingdom, shall

be tested. These Tests are preliminary to, but in kind not unlike, the test which God Himself will make of each life for final acceptance or rejection. God will search for an exclusive attitude of devotion within the secret heart. He will look for a "faith which worketh by love." But that is the same, in fact, as sincerity and obedience: for obedience springs alone from the heart, out of which are the issues of life.

1. The Tests of Discipleship Outlined: Known by Obedience and Sincerity. The heart is the ultimate point of testing life. But

Double Test of Life

Matthew 7:21-23

Luke 6:46

the integrity of life has two essential aspects, the external expression, and the inner principles of the heart. Christ provided for testing both. Life, in its external expression, must conform to the standards of truth and righteousness, as laid down in the Law of God. But that is not enough: for conformity may result from compulsion. There must be within the heart a love for righteousness, impelling life from within to seek conformity to the Law and the will of God. Men must live the truth, and do righteously, because they love truth and righteousness. They must serve Christ because they love Christ. The Lord Jesus therefore prescribed a double test on citizenship within His Kingdom.

God requires obedience. That is the first Test of Discipleship, and of life in general. "Not every one that saith unto Me, 'Lord,

**1. External Life
Tested by Obedience to Law**

Lord,' shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father Who is in Heaven." God's standard for Man's life is true obedience, and also complete obedience. And the first of all things that God requires is, that Man's life shall square with the standards of Divine Law. The meeting of that first requirement is possible through the two types of obedience which God requires of every life.

The first type of obedience is exhaustive personal effort for righteousness. For that a man must strive, using all of his intelligence and power, and availing himself of all the means of grace provided in Christ and administered through His Kingdom. The second type of obedience calls for faith and repentance, which includes confession to God, heart-sorrow for sin, prayer for forgiveness, and renewed allegiance to God.

Man must exhaust his own positive effort for righteousness. But even then, however great his attainments, he still has his past sins and failures to answer for before the Law of God. That can be done only by faith and repentance, which are also com-

manded as a part of God's Law for every man.⁹ When Christ said, "he that doeth the will of My Father," He meant obedience in both of these particulars, faith and repentance, and exhaustive efforts for righteousness. These two things, under the full measure of grace that is in Christ, alone can render a life acceptable to God, and give it an entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven. The same truth in other words is this. The condition of salvation and acceptance with God has always been repentance and faith in Christ; but that faith, to be effective, must work by love.

The moral account of life must stand balanced before the Law of God. There are but two ways to make that balance. The one is by judgment and execution for sin. The other is through the forgiving mercy of God, which is offered in Christ and received by personal faith in Him. The mercy of God in Christ is the only alternative to Divine judgment upon sin.

Therefore this Test of life has an application that is universal. The account of life must be balanced. Therefore God, Who is love, and Who wants to save, has left no choice about the duty of repentance and faith. He has expressly commanded men to repent and believe, and has repeated that command more often, perhaps, than any other command in the Word of God. The following references will help to show the emphasis which God has placed upon repentance as a part of the will of God, and the duty of every life.¹⁰

Therefore, as a Test of life on its tangible and measurable side, God requires that life stand conformed to His Law. This means two things. It means obedience, which is a living, working faith that works with all available might, even the might of Jesus Christ and His Spirit in the heart of man. It means repentance, which is itself a type of obedience. These things God requires,

⁹See John 6:29; 1. John 3:23; Acts 2:37-40; 4:12; 16:29-31; 17:30-31; Luke 24:47; Titus 2:10-15; 1. Peter 1:13-16.

¹⁰Ezekiel has quoted the Lord as commanding men to repent, and to turn from their idols, or else the Lord Himself will prosecute them before His own Throne of Judgment (Ezekiel 14:6-8). David regarded repentance as man's only hope of standing before the Lord (Psalm 130:3-4). John the Baptist preached repentance as the first duty of the world in preparation for the Coming of the Kingdom of Christ (Matthew 3:2). Jesus Christ preached repentance as the first step toward His Kingdom (Matthew 4:17; Mark 1:15). He also said that it was the refusal to repent that had shut His enemies among the Jews in that day out of the Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 21:31-32). Christ expressly said that it was only by repentance that men might even hope to escape from perishing (Luke 13:3-5). He approved the prayer, "God be merciful to me a sinner," as one that rendered the spirit acceptable to God (Luke 18:13-14). Peter insisted upon repentance as a condition of salvation (Acts 2:37-38); as a condition of making life right before God (Acts 3:19-26); and as the only hope of escaping divine judgment (Acts 8:22-23). Paul laid the duty of repentance upon the heathen philosophers of Athens, as the universal Law of God (Acts 17:30-31). John, in the Apocalypse, has represented the call to repentance as God's ultimatum to the souls of men (Revelation 2:16; 22:12-21).

looks for, and must find, in every life that is acceptable to Him: for acceptable life must stand conformed to the requirements of God's Law. Merely saying so is of no avail. Actually doing these things is what God requires under this Test of life.

God requires sincerity. That is the second Test of personal life. "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by Thy Name, and by Thy Name cast out devils, and by Thy Name do many mighty works?' And then will I profess unto them, 'I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity.' " It is neither saying things, nor claiming to perform, that actually counts in the final testing of life.

Ultimately it is the integrity of Man's heart-relations with God that counts. Sincerity of faith and love is the final Test of life. When sincerity breaks down, the services of life become hypocritical and sinful. Mere pretense is an insult to the Lord; and the pretender to services deserves to be summarily dispatched from the Divine Presence.

Life must be able to stand when God looks into the heart. That is what these Tests mean. Life must conform to the outward requirements of Law. By righteousness and repentance, the accounts of life must be balanced before God. This requires that the soul be linked to God by sincere faith and love and service. These things God requires of every man who would build a life-structure that would stand for time and eternity. To that truth Christ gave an idelible emphasis in the illustration with which He closed this Sermon on the Mount.

2. *The Tests of Discipleship Illustrated: the House on the Rock, and the House on the Sand.* Up to this point in His Sermon, Christ had set forth the facts of citizenship, and analyzed the Laws of His Kingdom. He had also outlined the Tests of obedience and sincerity, before which every life must either stand or fall. He had taught the truth of life, and how to live effectively.

**"Other Foundation
Can No Man Lay
than That Is Laid**

. . . Jesus Christ"

1. Corinthians 3:11

Matthew 7:24-27

Luke 6:47-49

But lest some person might fail to feel the full importance of His instructions, Christ closed this Sermon with an unforgettable illustration, showing how the observing of the truth of life, as He had given that truth, gives to one's life the power of endurance for time and eternity. That truth Christ illustrated by the contrast between the House built upon a Rock, and the House built upon the sand.

First, then, sincere faith and obedience, as taught in this Sermon, brings results that will stand the tests both of this life and of Divine judgment. Such a life is like a

1. The House That Will Not Fall

House Built upon a Rock, which no storms can shake. It has power to endure, when life is tested. This part of the illustration appeals to the higher and nobler elements in life. This appeal is nobler because it is positive. It is addressed to the constructive and co-operative spirit of man. It is, in its true effects, an invitation of Christ Himself, saying to all men, "Come, and let us build together for time and eternity. Let us build the House of Life on the Rock of Ages, which will stand forever more."

With the nobler spirits, this higher appeal is sufficient. But this appeal will not work with all men. With some the lower appeal of fear is more effective. Therefore,

2. The House That Will Not Stand

lest He should miss any, Christ stooped to this lower level, in His final word of warning. He pictured a House so built upon the sand, that it was completely destroyed by the storms. That House, He suggested, is like the life that fails to observe the truths which Christ has taught in this Sermon. This part of the illustration was a direct appeal to fear, as a last argument in the hearts of those who will not otherwise be moved to escape eternal ruin. Men must hear, and heed, and do the truth of God, if they would be saved.

"And great was the fall thereof." These last words of this Sermon should provoke solemn reflection. All Heaven is bent toward the saving of souls. What if some soul perish for lack of a wise relation to God? It is not merely that a soul is lost for ever; awful as that result may be! But it is that God's love has failed from a willful lack of response in man! It is that the divineness in life has been thrown away for sake of some sordid love of evil! It is that God's Heart of Love, and that of His Son, have been pierced through with an eternal sorrow! It is that a joy is for ever absent from the Courts of Heaven! When a soul fails, great is the fall thereof! Life, Love, Hope, and Joy eternal, all go down in the ruin. That was the last solemn suggestion of Christ, in this marvelous Sermon on the Mount.

The immediate effect of this Sermon was very great. Doubtless this was the greatest message ever delivered. Comparison between the accounts of it, as given by Matthew and by Luke, seem to show that their records have given only the outline of what Christ actually said to the people on that great occasion.

With what illustrations He may have driven these truths deep into the hearts of His hearers, it is difficult even to imagine!

**Immediate Effect
of This Sermon**
Matthew 7:28-29
and 8:1

The records say that "the multitudes were astonished at His teaching: for He taught them as One having authority, and not as the scribes." The electrifying effect of this

Sermon was still felt thirty years afterward, when Matthew made this comment in his *Gospel*.

Probably no other audience was ever so deeply moved. And why should there be wonder at the result! Jesus Christ, with astonishing insight, was telling men how to live their lives to the very best advantage! The Son of God, with Divine authority, was unfolding to men the true meaning of God's eternal Law!

There is no wonder that the people followed Jesus when He came down from the mountain. Neither is there any wonder that these gracious words of the Savior still echoed from the hearts of Peter, and James, and John, in their letters to the Church, thirty and even sixty years after this Sermon was delivered. Nor is there any wonder that this Sermon is the best known, and the most memorized, portion of all the Bible. These words of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, are the *Magna Carta* of Human Hope and Happiness.

PART IV

THE PROPAGATION OF THE KINGDOM
OF CHRIST

THREE QUESTIONS ANSWERED

PERSONAL SALVATION

"But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." *Romans 6:22-23.*

"Hearken diligently unto Me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto Me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people. Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for He hath glorified thee. Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." *Isaiah 55:2-7.*

RESPONSIBILITY TOWARD OTHERS

"For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him. For whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved.

How then shall they call on Him in Whom they have not believed?

And how shall they believe in Him of Whom they have not heard?

And how shall they hear without a preacher?

And how shall they preach, except they be sent?

. . . . How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of Peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" *Romans 10:12-15.*

REASONS FOR REJECTING CHRIST

"For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men." *1. Corinthians 1:21-25.*

"He that believeth on Him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the Name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that Light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." *John 3:18-19.*

CHAPTER XI

THE POPULAR PREACHING OF THE KINGDOM

"The Kingdom shall come to the Daughter of Jerusalem."
Micah 4:8.

"For what if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid." *Romans 3:3-4.*

"Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the Tree of Life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." *Revelation 22:14.*

"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him; God also bearing them witness?"
Hebrews 2:3-4.

The Lord Jesus was ministering in Galilee, in that part of His Life-Work that is commonly called the "Second Period of the Galilean Ministry." That period included all of those stirring events from the Choosing of the Twelve Apostles until the departure of Jesus from Galilee into the regions of Tyre and Sidon. The work of that period is divided into two major divisions. The first part of the work was the organization of the Kingdom of Christ in the world. This was accomplished by the choosing of the Twelve Apostles, and the laying down of principles in the Sermon on the Mount. The second part of His work at that time was the definite program of Christ to propagate the Kingdom which He had organized.

Part IV of the Lord's Life-Work, as analyzed in this book, deals with this program of propagation. The organization of the

Part IV: Three New Lines of Christ's Work

Kingdom, as discussed in Part III, marked the beginning of a new stage in the work of the Son of God. Before that event, the Lord's purpose had been to present Himself to the world; and His activities had consequently been of a more general character than they ever were in any of His later work. The inauguration of the Kingdom was a very definite event; and henceforth the Lord's Life-Work was closely related to the mission of that Kingdom, which was now organized as a permanent institution in the world.

During this period when the Kingdom was being widely propagated, the Lord's work was subdivided into three definite lines of activity, which ran parallel through this "Second Period of the Galilean Ministry." The Lord carried forward the propagation of His Kingdom in a popular manner among the people. He defended that Kingdom against the attacks of His enemies, who grew strong and bold during this period. He instructed and

trained the Twelve Apostles for the responsible work of the Kingdom to which He had called them. These lines of the Lord's activity will be considered separately in this chapter and the two that follow.¹

This chapter deals with the propagation of the Kingdom, which Christ began, immediately after its organization, to advance among the common people of Galilee.

General Method of Propagating the Kingdom—through Personality His principal method in this work was to appeal directly through the power of personality. He said little about the Kingdom as an institution to be advanced. He looked always upon the Kingdom of Heaven as being in the hearts of men; and so He brought the power of consecrated personality to bear upon the lives of men. He used living truth, and loving-kindness, and active goodness, bringing these into touch with actual life. Thus He inspired a living conviction of His own saving power. Thus He begat a newness of life through the contagion of life itself. Thus He satisfied hungry souls with the hope and assurance which His Kingdom held forth to all the world.

I. Propagation of the Kingdom by Personal Contact

Christ began the propagation of His Kingdom through the immediate personal touch of Himself with the hearts of others. In some cases He was active in giving the touch. In others He was

¹Since each of these three lines of Christ's activity extended through this Second Part of His Galilean Ministry, Chapters XI, XII, and XIII are parallel, each covering, from its own point of view, this entire period. The following tabulation will show the order of events, and where they are treated in the several chapters:

<i>Order of Events</i>	<i>Chapter XI</i>	<i>Chapter XII</i>	<i>Chapter XIII</i>
1. The Centurion's Faith.....	233—234		
2. Raising the Widow's Son.....	234—235		
3. Re-Assurance to John.....	235—238		
4. Personal Devotion to Jesus.....	238—239	266—268	
5. Fellowship in His Work.....	240		
6. Attempt to Bring Christ into League with Satan ("The Unpardonable Sin").....		269—278	
7. Attempt to Scorn Jesus.....		278—281	
8. Teaching by Parables.....	240—249		
9. Christ's Power over Nature (Stilling the Tempest)			292—294
10. Power over Demons at Gadara.....			294—295
11. Power over Sickness, etc.			295—296
12. Power over Death.....			296—298
13. Power over Men to Bless: (1) The Two Blind Men.....			298—299
(2) A Dumb Demoniac.....			299—300
14. Power Limited by Unbelief.....			300
15. Preaching Tour of Christ.....			301
16. Preaching of the Apostles.....	249		301—309
17. Speculations as to Christ.....	249—250		
(Death of John the Baptist).....	250, n.12		
18. Attempt to Make Jesus King.....	251—254		
19. Faith Tested: Walking on Water.....			309—312
20. Discourse on Bread of Life.....	254—262	281—283	312—314
21. The Meaning of Life.....	262—263	283—287	314—315

the recipient of personal devotions. But in all cases He touched the inner life; and that touch was the source of blessing.

1. Personal Touch through the Active Services of Christ. The Kingdom of Christ was to be a power for active benediction to the world. At once upon its organization, the King began to dispense His blessings through an open channel of grace arising from some contact which He had made with the inner life of those whom He blessed.

The first blessing so dispensed was that to the Centurion in the healing of his servant. The point of contact in this case was the Centurion's faith. Christ had just returned to Capernaum from the preaching of His great Sermon on the Mount. To Him at once came this Centurion from the city, because he had a very dear servant lying palsied, and at the point of death. This

1. Christ's Response to the Centurion's Faith
Matthew 8:5-13
Luke 7:1-10

Roman officer may have known Jesus before this event. He may have been influenced by some report of Jesus, and especially by report of His recent matchless Sermon; for all men must have been talking at that time about that Sermon. He may have heard the Sermon himself. Whatever the moving cause, the Centurion had come, with deliberate confidence, to seek help from the Son of God in behalf of the afflicted servant.

The manner of the Centurion's appeal to Christ serves to emphasize the central truth of the incident. There were two stages in his appeal. In the first, the Centurion sent a deputation of elders to Jesus. They emphasized the extreme condition of the servant, and requested the healing. They also urged their case by affirming that the

(1) Manner of the Centurion's Appeal
Matthew 8:6-9
Luke 7:3-8

Centurion was a worthy man, patriotic, and zealous in religion. With a promptness that is noticeable, Jesus said, "I will come and heal him," and started on His way at once to render the service. In the second stage of the appeal, while Jesus was on the way, the Centurion sent also a deputation of his friends. Then he instructed to apologize for so much troubling the Master, to disclaim all worthiness of a visit from Him, and to declare the Centurion's definite confidence that Jesus could perform the healing merely by the word of His power.

What was the nature of the Centurion's faith? It was an active faith, being one that sought a blessing. It was an absolute faith, being without doubt or hesitation. It was an intelligent faith, being directed toward that divine attribute in Christ from

which the blessing was to come. It was an effective faith, being itself an apperceptive condition for the favorable application

of Christ's power in blessing the Centurion's life.² This man had an implicit faith in Christ's complete authority and control over the laws of Nature; and that was the point of contact between the Centurion and the Son of God.

That truth is one which Jesus had greatly emphasized in His recent Sermon on the Mount. One is led to wonder indeed if the Centurion may not have heard that Sermon, and then hurried home, only to find his beloved servant in great need of that Divine power which the Centurion had so recently witnessed. If this coming to Christ was the result of mere report, the reporter must have given a remarkable account of the teachings and the authority of Jesus; for the Centurion's faith was of such character and such strength as to call forth the admiration of the Son of God.

The Centurion was accustomed to military authority; and he applied the absoluteness of that authority to Christ in His complete control over natural law.

**(3) Response of
Jesus to the
Centurion's Faith
Matthew 8:11-13
Luke 7:9-10**

Jesus marveled at the man's grasp of the truth. This Roman officer had seen clearly what the sons of Israel had failed to see. Whatever else the Centurion may have believed, the records do not say; but this much is certain, that he fully recognized Christ as Divine, the Sovereign Ruler of the World. The clearness of this insight deeply moved the Son of God. Perhaps with a sigh of sadness in His heart, the Lord Jesus reflected upon the slowness of the Jews to recognize His Own true Nature, and the failure of God's ancient and long favored people to realize their covenanted hope.³ The Roman Centurion, however, believed; and Christ met that faith with just recognition, in the giving of the requested word of command, which the messengers, upon returning home, found to have been immediately effective in the healing of the palsied servant.

The Centurion had sought the help of Jesus; but there was no active appeal in the next situation of sorrow. The object of the

**2. Compassion of
Jesus toward the
Widow of Nain
Luke 7:11-17**

Lord's compassion on this occasion was a stricken widow, passively bowed under the second greatest possible grief of her life. She lived in the city of Nain, and was at this time on the way to bury her only son.

The funeral procession, composed of a large number of people

from the city, was just coming out of the city gate, en route to the place of burial.

There Jesus met them, being accompanied Himself by His Disciples⁴ and a great multitude. In this situation of sorrow, Jesus was the active person. Looking over the scene, He came to the sorrowing mother. With divine tenderness He comforted her, saying, "Weep not." Then, going to the bier and placing His hand upon it so as to stop it and the procession, He gave the Divine command which brought the young man to life again. In all of this scene Jesus was active, waiting not for any appeal. Hearts full of sorrow are ripe already for the touch of Heaven. Where grief is, there is contact enough for Divine compassion that blesses life.

The net result of this miracle was worthy of the divine interest manifested. The true reward of service was there, in the joy of seeing this son completely restored, and given again to his grateful mother. The whole situation, for a moment at least, must have been very exciting. Christ took complete charge of the entire situation. He quietly comforted the woman. He firmly stopped the procession. Doubtless all eyes were straining to see what would happen next. Christ spoke the command. The dead man sat up, and began to speak. A thrill of awe and fear swept over the crowd. In a moment they saw the meaning of what had happened. Then they burst forth in shouts of praise, glorifying God. Some said, "A great prophet is risen among us!" Others, seeing more deeply, said, "God hath visited His people!" That was true; and the report of this incident greatly extended the fame of the Son of God.

**(2) Results of
This Miracle
Luke 7:15-17**

**3. Re-Assuring
Message of Jesus to
John the Baptist,
and to the People
Matthew 11:2-19
Luke 7:18-35**

At length this increasing renown of Jesus reached John the Baptist, who was then in prison. John therefore sent a direct inquiry to Jesus, which called forth an illuminating reply to John, and a statement about John the Baptist's greatness to the people that was equally illuminating.

²The apperceptive condition of mind and heart in this Centurion was exactly opposite to that of the Jewish leaders in that day. For their want of apperceptive readiness to recognize and accept the Son of God, see Chapter V, pages 106-108. See also Chapter XII, note 3, and "Apperception" in the Index.

³Christ felt toward His own countrymen, and dealt with them sympathetically as long as He saw any hope in them. But as certain factions of them more and more clearly defined themselves to be hopeless of any favorable response to Him, His measures with them became more firm and unsparing. A careful comparison of the following references, with their contexts, will show something of the progress

The frankness of John's inquiry shows an honest desire to know the truth. The points of contact were, first, intellectual, and then spiritual. John's disciples had brought to him in prison a report of the wonderful works of Jesus. Though a little discouraged possibly at the turn of affairs in his own life, John still could not doubt. Yet he felt a desire for that formal assurance of Jesus as the Messiah of Promise. Hence John sent his disciples to Jesus, frankly to inquire, "Art Thou He that cometh, or look we for another?" John wanted that final assurance that Jesus was the Son of God.

In reply Jesus gave some facts, and afterwards extolled the personality of John. Jesus said neither "Yes," nor "No," in answer to the inquiry. He merely called attention to the facts; and thus paid to John one of the highest tributes ever paid to man. At that moment Jesus was busily engaged with healing ministries. Hence He told John's messengers to return and report to him what they had seen and heard,—a Master of loving service, and a Gospel of sympathy with the poor. Jesus also itemized a few particulars for their report, giving finally an assurance of Himself as the source of blessedness to all the world. That was all.

But that was enough. In His closing words, "And blessed is he, whosoever shall find none occasion of stumbling in Me," Jesus did strongly suggest the central idea of the Messianic promise in the ancient Covenant made with Abraham. (*Genesis* 12:2-3). That thought would naturally stimulate the faith of John. Otherwise, Jesus merely gave John the tangible facts. But in so doing Jesus paid to John the compliment of divine confidence in his spiritual insight into the true meaning of those facts. Jesus knew John,—the man who had called the world to repentance, and prepared the way before the Lord,—and knew that he had that in his heart which would enable him to read these facts aright, and thus to know the truth about Himself as the Son of God, the Messiah of Promise.

**Christ's Confidence
in John's
Spiritual Insight**

**(1) John's Message
to Jesus—Desire to
Know the Truth**
Matthew 11:2-3
Luke 7:18-20

**(2) Jesus' Reply to
John—Facts to be
Interpreted**
Matthew 11:4-6
Luke 7:21-23

of Christ's developing attitude toward those who were increasingly violent in their opposition to Him. *Matthew* 13:42, 50; *Luke* 13:28; 14:1-24; 15:1-32; 16:1-31; *Matthew* 21:28-46; 22:1-14; 23:1-39; 24:51; and 25:30-46.

⁴"Disciples" usually means the Twelve Apostles, as is evident in most of the passages where the term occurs.

Perhaps it was this implied compliment which led Jesus, after the messengers were gone, to extol John openly before the people.

In this exaltation, as will appear, Christ had a definite purpose. First, He magnified the character of John. In personality, John was neither a weakling nor a temporizer, but a man of definite convictions and stable purposes. John's greatness was not conventional,—a greatness depending upon mere

things of life, and magnified in the eyes of men by the multitude of luxuries with which life is surrounded. No: that is the greatness of kings' palaces. But John's simplicity of life, separated widely as it was from social conventions, revealed the naked grandeur of his own personality. In official character, John was more than a prophet: he was the special Messenger of Heaven, sent on a mission such as that to which no other man was ever appointed.

Continuing His exaltation, Jesus analyzed further the greatness of John. In point of natural endowments, John was unsurpassed among those born of woman. He

**John's Greatness
and Position in
History**

was probably the genius among prophets. Yet he was only a Forerunner of the Kingdom of Christ. As respects the wider and more spiritual privileges of that Kingdom, for which John prepared the way, he was inferior to the common citizen within the Kingdom. There was compensation for him, however, in the unique place which he filled in human history. His work marked the close of the old dispensation of the world, and the beginning of the new dispensation. John was also the fulfillment of ancient prophecy, a definite and conscious part of God's plan in the world, and one through whom consciously that plan externalized itself before the eyes of men.

Thus far Jesus carried with Him the sympathetic response of the people in this eulogy; for all held John to be a great prophet.

Building upon this sympathetic interest, Jesus analyzed the reception which the people had given John, as an argument for a sympathetic reception of Christ Himself. Why had the common people generally received John with approval, while their leaders, as a rule, rejected him?

The answer is found in the law of apperception. The hearts of the common people were open to truth, and their souls were

**(3) Christ's Exalta-
tion of John—
Heaven's Special
Messenger
Matthew 11:7-11
Luke 7:24-28**

**(4) John's Recep-
tion by the People
—an Argument for
Accepting Christ
Matthew 11:15-19
Luke 7:29-35**

responsive to the calls of righteousness. Therefore they accepted both John and Jesus. But the rulers who rejected had no such

Why Some Jews Rejected John and Jesus attitude of mind and heart: they offered not the conditions of sympathetic response. Instead they had set their hearts in opposition. With them the question of sympathy

was closed. Their hearts responded only to suggestions of stubborn opposition. John had called them to repent; but they had no sorrow for sin. Jesus was calling them to faith and love; but they sat like peevish and spiteful children in the market-place, who would neither weep nor dance. That generation found fault alike with John and with Jesus, and for the same reason of wanting that in the heart which would respond to the truth. With a call to apperceptive response Jesus began this analysis (*Matthew 11:15*). He closed it with an expression of confidence in historical judgment to approve the analysis given (*Luke 7:35*).

2. *Personal Touch through Devotion to Christ.* The Son of God had no fears for His position, and none for the triumph of His Kingdom. History was already busy in His favor. His character and His teachings were already being established in the hearts of men and women. Some in high places were rejecting Him. But from humbler hearts, where truth had taken root, He was receiving, as a token of increasing triumph, the devotions of pure love, and the active co-operation of consecrated lives. The events now coming under consideration reflect this accumulating progress of His Kingdom in and through the love and services of His devoted followers.

The first reflection of the hold of His Kingdom upon human hearts was from an act of pure devotion to Jesus. The incident was that in which the grateful woman anointed the feet of Jesus in the house of Simon the Pharisee. Here the devoted and the unsympathetic were brought into definite contrast, in such a manner as should advance the interests of the Kingdom.

1. Contact with Jesus Through Personal Devotion to Him
Luke 7:36-50

The woman was rendering a devotion of pure love. She was not an intruder; for the social usage of the time allowed such liberties when guests were at the table. Her manner, doubtless, was quiet and sincere. Her devotions were simple, but lavish in the love expressed. Her motive was gratitude for Christ's blessing upon her once sinful life. She stood behind Him while He reclined at the table. She washed His feet with

(1) Pure Devotion of the Woman
Luke 7:36-38

her tears, wiped them with her hair, kissed them in humble devotion, and anointed them with an alabaster cruse of ointment. Her act of simple love was probably done in total unconsciousness that she was attracting attention from any of the company present at the table.

But her devotion was not unseen. Jesus saw it. And the keen-eyed critical Simon saw it, and drew certain hostile conclusions in his own mind. What then followed belongs also to the next chapter, and will be further considered there.⁵ Jesus accepted the woman's devotions, and defended her.

(2) Divine Response of Jesus
Luke 7:39-47

He knew her life, far more about it in fact than Simon had presumed to know. By using the parable of two debtors, forgiven respectively five hundred pence and fifty pence, and each loving in proportion to the grace received, Jesus secured Simon's approval of a principle under which he himself then stood condemned. Forgiveness and responses of love stand in direct proportion to each other. This truth Jesus applied to the case in hand. The woman, having been a great sinner and having been forgiven much, had great love for Jesus, which she was rightly rendering. But Simon, whose devotions were scant even in point of common hospitality, showed in his failures that he had small love (probably no love) for Jesus, arising out of forgiveness or any other vital interest in the Son of God.

The results of this incident are not all stated. The effect upon Simon of this searching analysis of Jesus is passed in silence.

(3) Results of This Incident
Luke 7:48-49

The woman was given a re-assurance of her forgiveness, which was appropriate to her needs at that moment, and was then dismissed with commendations of her faith and a blessing of peace. The Pharisees who sat at the table, as might have been expected, did not respond favorably to this touch of the Divine Savior upon their lives. They were filled with astonishment at what they considered the audacity of Jesus. They began at once, perhaps each to his nearest companion at the table, to express their secret resentment of the divine authority in Jesus whereby He forgave the woman's sins. Thus this incident served to define more clearly the points at issue between the Son of God and the Pharisees.

But the once sinful woman had responded to the Lord, and had thereby received the blessing dearest to her heart. Her devotion

⁵See Chapter XII, pages 266-268.

was an act of pure love, going out directly to her Savior, and was, therefore, in the nature of worship. Perhaps the order

**2. Contact with
Jesus through Fel-
lowship in His
Daily Work
Luke 8:1-3**

of events here is significant. The next incident in the record is one where love, equally intense no doubt, expressed itself in the form of active effort in co-operation with the daily ministry of Jesus.

Again the chief actors of the scene were women, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's

**(1) Names of
the Companions**

steward, Susanna, and many others. These women were associated with Jesus and the Apostles, as helpers in their work, during their second preaching tour through the cities

and villages of Galilee.

These helpers had two motives for their co-operation. First, they were grateful to Jesus because He had healed them in body

**(2) Two Motives
of the Women**

and in spirit. Further, they desired to help with the work of the Kingdom. What they did is not told, more than that "they ministered to them of their substance." Possibly

they provided food, preparing it when there was need, while Jesus and the Apostles preached the Gospel of the Kingdom. Whatever their work, it was of such worth as to be recalled by Luke thirty years afterward for record in connection with the propagation of the Kingdom.

II. Propagation of the Kingdom by Direct Instruction

After the vigorous clash with the Pharisees that is described in the early part of the next chapter,⁶ Jesus continued the propagation of His Kingdom among the general multitude. His new method was that of direct instruction. In a popular way, He explained, by means of parables, the nature and development of His Kingdom in the hearts of men. This Kingdom He always considered to be a renewed spiritual life, which had a beginning, a development, and a consummation. By means of the following parables He showed how that Kingdom transformed the whole life from within, bringing a blessedness for time and eternity.

I. Six Parables on the Nature and Growth of the Kingdom. The parables fall into three groups, the first group of six being devoted to the nature and growth of the Kingdom. In the case

⁶See Chapter XII, pages 266-268; also Note 1, above.

of two of these, Christ gave His own full interpretation, as He may have done for the others when they were spoken. His expositions show that the Parable, as He used it, was designed to illustrate and impress a central truth, to which sometimes emphasis was contributed by certain details of the similitude. These six parables are sub-grouped in the following manner.

The first two parables show the Means by which the Kingdom grows in the hearts of men. In general, the inception and growth

1. Two Parables on the Means by Which the Kingdom Grows

of the Kingdom is by the Word of God: for "the entrance of Thy Word giveth life"; and fellowship with Christ is possible only when men live their lives consistent with His truth.⁷

The Parable of the Four Kinds of Sowing shows that the harvest results from the combined response of the seed and the soil.

(1) Parable of the Four Kinds of Sowing

Matthew 13:1-23

Mark 4:1-20

Luke 8:4-15

This central truth, applied to the Kingdom, means that it grows into fruitfulness by the Word of God, but that His Word is effective according to the spiritual apperception, and consequent responsiveness, which that Word finds in the hearts of men.

The Parable represents four kinds of sowing, giving, in each case, the condition of the soil, the history of the growth, and the results of the harvest. The first seed fell

a. Parable Stated

Matthew 13:1-9

Mark 4:1-9

Luke 8:4-8

by the wayside, where the birds devoured it, so that there was no harvest. The second fell on stony ground, where the growth was a failure, and again there was no harvest.

The third fell into ground infested with thorns, which choked the good grain and prevented a harvest. The fourth fell into good ground, where the growth was fine, and the harvest was bountiful.

After stating these facts, Christ, answering an inquiry of the Apostles, gave His reasons for teaching in parables. First, the

b. Reasons for Teaching in Parables

Matthew 13:10-17

Mark 4:10-12, 33-34

Luke 8:9-10

Cf. Note 2 above

disciples of Christ were spiritually minded, and so were permitted to hear the truth directly stated: others were denied that privilege. Furthermore, the unbelieving Jews to whom Jesus spoke were self-brought under judgment, being so deadened in sin that they neither saw, nor heard, nor understood; yet their responsibility, as foreseen in ancient

prophecy, was one which they could not escape. But the disciples,

⁷See *I. John*, Chapter I.

being repentant and responsive, could understand the truth, and so had that privilege. Parables were a test of the people.

This Parable was formally interpreted by Jesus. Point by point, He explained the meaning. The wayside sowing represents

c. Interpretation
of the Parable
Matthew 13:18-23
Mark 4:13-20
Luke 8:11-15

those who physically hear the Word, but whose want of spiritual apperception to understand the truth causes their lives to be unresponsive and fruitless. The stony-ground hearers receive the Word with superficial joy; but they lack strong attachment

therein to withstand hard conditions, and so are fruitless. The thorny-ground hearers are those who have other and stronger apperceptive materials in the heart than those to which the Word makes its appeal. When the tests come, such hearts respond to the dominating interests of life, leaving the Word choked and fruitless. But the good-ground hearers are those whose hearts are prepared. They therefore hear the Word with understanding, and hold fast to it, making it bring forth fruit in daily life. In general, the Parable teaches that the Kingdom succeeds by virtue of that in the heart with which the Truth of God may establish an effective contact, such as will yield a permanent response in life and conduct.

To this Parable Jesus added the brief parable, or comparison, of the Lighted Candle, which is placed "on a stand, that they

(2) Parable of the
Lighted Candle
Mark 4:21-25
Luke 8:16-18
See Note 8 below

which enter in may see the light." The business of an enlightened life is to radiate an enlightening influence upon the world. Truth molds life; and men must see the modifications. The secret philosophy of life one thinks he holds is not secret. It colors his

thought and controls his conduct. In the heart "nothing is hid, that shall not be made manifest; nor anything secret, that shall not be known and come to light." It is well, therefore, to take heed how one hears. Life and influence depend upon the truth or error one accepts. Here again Jesus applied the law of apperception. Results of hearing depend upon the content and responsiveness of the heart: "for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he thinketh he hath."

These first two parables emphasize man's responsibility in respect to the growth of the Kingdom of Christ. It comes into

⁸For other discussions of "Light," see Chapter VII, pages 163-168; Chapter IX, page 203; Chapter XI, page 247.

the heart, and grows there, by the Word of God; but that Word is effective according to the condition and responsiveness of the heart itself. Man must get the truth that transforms life, and then must make the resulting transformations felt in the lives of others. The receiving and the giving are both required, if the Kingdom is to grow properly and adequately in one's life.

The second two parables deal with the Manner in which the Kingdom grows. The first two emphasized the human side of the process of growth. These two point more directly to the divine side, showing God's attitude toward growth, and His secret provisions for that growth. The two parables are that of the Tares, and that of the Seed Growing Secretly.

2. Two Parables on the Manner in Which the Kingdom Grows

(1) Parable of the Tares Matthew 13:24-30; and 13:36-43

The Parable of the Tares shows that the citizens of the Kingdom grow up in a world where there is evil; that the growing Kingdom is the thing that prevents the world of evil from being summarily destroyed; and that the patience of the Lord in suspending for a time the just judgment of the sinful world is exercised only that the growth and work of the Kingdom may be perfected in the harvesting of the saints.

These truths are evident in the outline of the Parable, and are emphasized in its interpretation. The Kingdom is like a man who sowed good seed in his field, and while he slept an enemy came and sowed tares. When both had come up, the man's servants wanted to destroy the tares at once; but the man forbade their doing so, lest they destroy the good grain along with the tares. He advised that both be allowed to grow together until the harvest; and that then the separation might be made, and the tares be destroyed, while the good grain was saved.

The meaning of these things Christ explained to His disciples privately, as follows.⁹ The Sower is the Son of Man; the field is the world; the good seed are the sons of the Kingdom; the tares are the sons of the evil one; the enemy is the Devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. The central truth of the Parable is the growth of the Kingdom in the midst of growing evil in the

⁹This interpretation was given to the disciples, after they had gone into the house. See Note 10, page 245. On the final separation, see *Matthew* 8:12; 22:13; 25:30-46 *Luke* 13:28; and the discussion below of the Parable of the Drag-Net. See also the "Salt of the Earth," above in Chapter VII, pages 161-163.

world; and the final separation and fate of the wicked and of the righteous.

They grow together now, but their destinies differ. "The sons of the evil one" were defined by Christ as those who mislead others, and those who themselves do iniquity. These all shall be separated from the righteous, and be destroyed with great anguish of soul. But the righteous, thus separated, shall shine as the sun in the Kingdom of the Father. That is the meaning of this Parable, as Christ gave it to His Apostles, who were prepared to understand the truth. The doings of sin are doomed; but the judgment is suspended until the growth and purposes of Christ's Kingdom have been fulfilled. Then that Kingdom, isolated from all evil, shall be exhibited in its triumphant glory.

Meantime the Kingdom grows secretly and mysteriously by the grace of God in the hearts of men. That is the central meaning of the Parable of the Seed Growing Secretly, and according to the mysterious processes of growth, while the days and nights are passing.

**(2) Parable of the
Seed Growing
Secretly
Mark 4:26-29**

The facts of the Parable are these. The seed is cast into the earth, and left there while time passes. At length the seed grows; but the manner of the growth is not outwardly apparent, nor indeed is it understood. The process of the growth is thus analyzed. "The earth beareth fruit of itself." That is, growth results from life in the seed coming into touch with conditions in the earth that promote life and growth. The resulting growth is gradual, from seed to fruitage. The entire process, producing the ripening harvest, arises out of the nature of life and the secret law of its development.

The Parable means that the Kingdom in the heart grows, secretly, mysteriously, and triumphantly, under the conditions of grace which God, in His providences, brings to bear upon that new life of the spirit. When vital seed and right conditions of earth come together, there is growth. The Kingdom is life. It needs only the nourishments of truth and grace, the cultivation of loving services, and the hardening effects of adversity, to bring it to full maturity and abundant fruitage. Christian people go about the common duties of daily life. But the experiences and providences through which they pass are to their spiritual life what good soil conditions are to the vital seed. The renewed spirit responds naturally to the touch and call of

**a. Facts of the
Parable**

**b. Meaning of
the Parable**

God through daily life; and thereby the secret laws of spirit-growth become operative in the soul. That is what the Parable means. The growth of the Kingdom in the heart is the response of the spirit to those situations, and under those circumstances, that constitute the conditions of spiritual life and growth.

The last two the first six parables illustrate the Measure to which the Kingdom grows. The first of these two parables is that of the Mustard Seed. The second is the Parable of the Leaven which was hid in three measures of meal until the whole was leavened.

**3. Two Parables
on the Measure
to Which the
Kingdom Grows**

The Parable of the Mustard Seed has two main points of fact. The one emphasizes the small size of the seed; and the other, the magnitude of the completed growth. The mustard seed is "less than all seed," yet it grows "greater than the herbs, and becometh a tree," powerful enough to lodge the birds in its branches. The central truth in this Parable is simple. The Kingdom has a small beginning in the heart; but it grows to be a mighty power in the life. From a mere touch of regenerating life in the soul, the Kingdom develops into a power in life that reaches out in service to others. The Parable points to the magnitude of the growth.

In like manner the Parable of the Hidden Leaven emphasizes the completeness of growth in the Kingdom as a transforming power in life. The woman hid the leaven in three measures of meal; and there it grew "till it was all leavened." So is the Kingdom in one's life. It begins with a small power in the heart,—only a touch of sanctifying grace; but it works on in the heart quietly, until it permeates and sanctifies every thought, and word, and action of life.¹⁰

Thus Christ analyzed the nature and growth of His Kingdom in the hearts of men. It grows by means of the Word of God and the light of Truth in human life. It grows, until its purposes are accomplished, side by side with the evil that is in this present world. It grows, by the natural laws of spiritual re-

¹⁰At the close of this parable there was a change in the situation. Jesus left the general multitude, and went with the disciples into the house. Matthew points out that this method of speaking in parables was according to the plan laid down for the Christ in the ancient Scriptures (13:34-35). Mark intimates that it was a means of testing spiritual discernment (4:33-34).

sponse, under the grace of God. It grows, from a small beginning, into power, becoming itself an effective instrument for service. It grows until it completely transforms the whole life of the individual.

2. *Two Parables on the Values and Methods of Attaining the Kingdom.* From the Growth of His Kingdom, Jesus next turned His thought to the Values and Methods of Attaining that Kingdom. As a means of making clear His teachings on these topics, He expressed the truth in two short parables,—the Parable of the Treasure Hidden in the Field, and that of the Pearl of Great Price, both of which involve the question of values as a determining consideration.

In the Parable of the Hidden Treasure, Jesus compared the mode of attaining His Kingdom to the action of a man who had found a valuable treasure in a field. He hid the treasure; and, in his joy, he went and sold all he had, and came and bought that field. He bought the field in order to possess the treasure. He considered it a good bargain to invest all he had in that field, because it contained the treasure.

Buying the field was a means to an end,—the possession of the treasure, which stands for the Kingdom. That fact is at the center of the Parable. It is worth while to invest *all* in the *means* by which the Kingdom may be secured. It is a duty, indeed, to invest everything in those things that bring the Kingdom, such as material support, study, effort, service, worship. This Parable lays stress upon the media through which the Kingdom enters the heart. All business, and all professional life, should be made subservient to this end. A man must work at, and utilize, and possess, those means through which the Kingdom may come into his own life. This Parable points to a practical responsibility in the matter of personal salvation and blessedness.

The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price lays emphasis upon the value of the Kingdom as an end in itself, to be come at directly. The attainment here is like the direct investment of a merchant who was hunting valuable pearls. He found one of great value, and went and sold all he had, and came and bought that valuable pearl. He considered it worth while to invest everything in a thing of so great value.

**1. Parable of the
Hidden Treasure
Matthew 13:44**

**Meaning of
the Parable**

**2. Parable of the
Pearl of Great
Price
Matthew 13:45-46**

The central truth of this Parable is the wisdom and duty of investing everything, including life itself, in the Kingdom of God as a direct investment. This truth raises some philosophical questions; but questions always that should resolve themselves into definite results; for the Parable points not to speculation, but to decision and action.

**Meaning of
the Parable**

This truth has a personal application of far-reaching importance. It raises the question of what the Kingdom is worth in the life of the individual. What does it mean in point of value to be a part of that Kingdom, with all of its blessedness? The deeper truth of this Parable means the complete identification of life itself with the Kingdom, and therefore with God's laws, and His work, and His purposes in the world. This Parable raises the question, What will a man give in exchange for his soul? What is the price of his life? In what really is his life being invested? What finally will be the returns on that investment? Investing all in the Kingdom is good business. It brings one into line with the love of God. It insures to one the goodness of God (*Romans 8:28*). It makes rich, and adds no sorrow therewith. That is life's best bargain.

**(1) Personal Appli-
cation of the
Parable**

This truth has also an altruistic application. Life that is invested in the Kingdom must also be identified with the promotion of the Kingdom. The citizen of the Kingdom is the salt of the earth, and the light of the world. He does not live alone, nor apart from others; nor does he realize

his own purposes apart from a larger identifying of himself with the purposes of God. He invests time and energy and money in the Kingdom directly, and in the things that promote the Kingdom,—its public worship, its Bible study, its personal work, its missionary and evangelistic enterprises and programs. Investing everything in the Kingdom for the sake of others, the Christian finds that the full enriching possession of the Kingdom is coming into his own life. He buys the Kingdom as a responsibility, and thereby comes to realize it as a possession above price.

3. *Two Parables on the Work and Consummation of the Kingdom.* Finally, the Lord gave two parables on the work and the consummation of His Kingdom. These are the Parable of the Drag-Net, and the semi-parable of the Householder.

The Parable of the Drag-Net, like that of the Tares, discriminates between the external body of the visible Kingdom in the

world, and the real Kingdom as a thing of spirit and truth in the heart. Both parables point to an eventual separation between the good and the evil. In the former parable

**1. Parable of
the Drag-Net
Matthew 13:47-50**

the separation was to be between the Kingdom as such and the outside evil world. Here, however, the separation is between the true and the false within the Kingdom itself.

The use of the drag-net, with which all were familiar who lived near the Sea of Galilee, was the basis of comparison in this Parable. "Again, the Kingdom of Heaven

**(1) Statement of
the Parable
Matthew 13:47-48**

is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: which, when it was filled, they drew up on the beach; and they sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but the bad they cast away."

The followers of Christ must carry forward the work of His Kingdom in the world. When they do so, it is inevitable that the Kingdom would "catch" all kinds, as did the

**(2) Meaning of
the Parable
Matthew 13:49-50**

drag-net. That is, both the sincere and some who were insincere would come into the Kingdom when its advantages and blessings were offered to men. The total ingathering, at least under all ordinary circumstances, is to be brought before the Lord, Who alone is able to judge the secret of men's hearts. But He does know who are His, and who are not; and He, with unerring judgment, will at last draw the exact lines of His Kingdom, separating therefrom all who are unfit in heart for a portion with Him. They shall be destroyed, while His own true disciples shall be saved and blessed for ever more. This Parable contrasts the work of the Kingdom on earth with its consummation in Heaven.

In the final semi-parable of the Householder, Jesus touched upon the special relation of His Kingdom to the Jews, especially to their leaders and teachers. As an intro-

**2. Parable of the
Householder
Matthew 13:51-53**

duction, He first assured Himself that His own disciples understood the meaning of the parables He had spoken. Then He said to them, "Therefore every scribe who hath been made a disciple to the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a man that is a householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old." This is the picture of a man entertaining his friends. He goes to his stores, and brings out some things new and fresh, and some old and fine; and thus he enriches the pleasure of those to whom he is ministering.

So it should be with the scribe, who was the teacher of the Jews, if he should come into the Kingdom of Christ. Such a scribe would be possessor of the riches of two dispensations of God's grace, having been born to the old, and made partaker of the new by his acceptance of Christ. Such a scribe, drawing alike upon the treasures of the old and the new, might have greatly enriched the minds and hearts of those who came under his instruction and guidance. What, indeed, might he not have done, having that unique advantage! With what confidence and joy might he have turned the minds and hearts of men to Jesus Christ their Savior!

With this comparison, the immediate program of direct instruction closes. It closes, like most of the other methods of propagating the Kingdom in this period, with a thought of Israel, who were not adequately receiving Jesus Christ, Whom God had sent to be their Messiah. In this closing sentence,*Christ appealed to the leaders of that people to measure up to their heritage from the past, and to their opportunity in Him for the future. With that thought in His mind, the Lord left the scene of these remarkable teachings about the nature and work of His Kingdom.

III. Propagation of the Kingdom by Preaching Tours

Christ continued to propagate His Kingdom among the people.¹¹ His next method was that of preaching campaigns. He went forth Himself on His third preaching tour throughout Galilee. He also sent out the Twelve Apostles to preach the Kingdom, and to bring its healing ministries to those in need. These activities undoubtedly contributed much to the extension of the Kingdom in a popular way. But they are recorded, as appears from careful analysis of all accounts of them, more from the standpoint of their relation to the training of the Twelve, and so will be considered more fully in Chapter XIII.

IV. Propagation of the Kingdom by Clarifying Popular Conceptions Concerning Christ

The stirring events of this period had produced great excitement throughout all of Galilee and beyond that country. There were many speculations concerning Jesus, and many misconceptions in the minds of men. To the correction of these mistaken

¹¹These preaching tours were after the series of miracles which are considered in Chapter XIII. Compare Note 1, above.

notions about the Son of God, Jesus turned His attention in the series of incidents that yet remain for consideration in this chapter.

1. The Speculations by Herod and Others as to the Identity of Jesus. The public career of Jesus was then approaching the highest point of His popularity. Toward the Son of God men could not be comfortably neutral, nor wholly indifferent. Some accepted Him; some rejected; some misunderstood Him entirely. The record of the speculations focuses upon the perverted notions of King Herod.

General Speculations
 Matthew 11:1;
 14:1, 2, 13
 Mark 6:14-16
 Luke 9: 7-9
 See Note 12 below

At this time Jesus was engaged with His preaching tours in Galilee. The Apostles were also engaged with their own mission throughout that province. Herod had already put to death John the Baptist. The deed was foully done; and from the memory of it, Herod could not free himself. Stung by a wounded royal pride, and terrified by an evil imagination, Herod's mind was fertile soil for any suggestion about John the Baptist.

1. Background of the Speculations

Herod was therefore very decisive in his notion about Jesus. Some said that Jesus was Elijah; others said that one of the old prophets had risen from the dead. Some even suggested that John had returned to life. At first, Herod was greatly perplexed. He said, "John I beheaded: but who is this, about whom I hear such things?" And he sought to see Jesus. Then, terrified perhaps by the suggestion of John come to life, Herod settled upon that notion as the final definite explanation of the marvelous works done by Jesus.¹²

2. Substance of the Speculations

Herod's cruelty, and his subsequent concern about Jesus were reported to Jesus by His disciples. In order to avoid any undesirable encounter with the Tyrant, Jesus adopted the prudential plan of quietly keeping out of Herod's way. Following this plan, Jesus soon withdrew across the sea by boat, into a desert place, where He appears in the incident of His feeding the five thousand.

3. Results of the Speculations

¹²For the explanation of Herod's reasons for his conclusion, see *Matthew* 14:3-12, and *Mark* 6:17-29. In reading these accounts, one should notice Herod's conscious guilt (*Mark* 16:17); personal and political fear of the people (*Matthew* 5); religious fear of John (*Mat.* 5, *Mark* 20); safekeeping of John from the vengeance of Herodias (*Mark* 19-20); perplexity in dealing with John (*Mark* 20); generous attitude toward

2. *The Popular Movement to Make Jesus a Temporal King.*
Gradually the popular interest in Jesus settled into a definite conviction.

**General Statements
of the Movement**

Matthew 14:13-23

Mark 6:30-46

Luke 9:10-17

John 6:1-15

There was forming, how widespread no one can now know, the conclusion that this Worker of Wonders, this Benefactor of the people, must be their King. This popular feeling became active, at the Feeding of the Five Thousand, in an effort to crown Jesus as King of the Jews.

This event happened near the close of Christ's third preaching tour. It was after the speculations of Herod, and after the report of the Apostles on the work of their Mission.

**1. Setting of
the Movement**

Matthew 14:13

Mark 6:30-33

Luke 9:10

John 6:1-3

The incident happened in the desert region on the northeast coast of Galilee, whither Jesus and the Apostles had gone to avoid Herod, and to seek rest. But the eager multitude, divining this destination, hurried on foot around the north end of the Sea, and

were there waiting for Jesus when He landed from His boat-journey across the Sea. He greeted them kindly; and then, followed by the multitude, He withdrew from the coast to a mountain, where the events of this popular movement took place.

There were two immediate causes that brought this popular feeling toward Jesus to the point of decision and action. In general, it resulted from an overflow of gratitude,

**2. Causes of
the Movement**

which was probably not unmixed, in the minds of some at least, with a strong touch of self-interest. The enthusiasm and momentum

of the occasion arose from Christ's bountiful ministry to the spiritual needs and to the bodily needs of the people at that time.

Christ's ministry to their spirits came first, and may have been, with some at least, the stronger argument. In this ministry, although weary Himself, and seeking rest with

(1) Christ's Spiritual Ministry to the People

Matthew 14:14

Mark 6:34

Luke 9:11

John 6:1-3

His Apostles, Jesus was most gracious. Seeing the eagerness of the people, He gave them welcome. He had compassion on them because of their spiritual needs; for they were to Him as sheep without a shepherd. He gave them spiritual guidance, teaching them in many things, and speaking to them again

about the Kingdom of God. He healed their sick, which they

John, hearing him gladly (Mark 20); recognition of the high religious character and holy office of John (Mark 20); and the fact that even the Tyrant had been trapped

brought to Him in great numbers. Thus, for most of the day perhaps, He ministered mainly to their souls.

Then the evening came,—the weary end of the day, when the people needed food also for their bodies. In their eagerness for the touch of Christ upon their lives, the multitude had failed to take food with them into the desert. How could they get something to eat? Their plight moved the compassion of Jesus. Graciously and deliberately, He set Himself to supply their physical needs.

Jesus carefully made first a survey of the situation. He counseled with the Apostles as to the problem of feeding the people, and the possible solution of that problem.

a. Survey of the Situation

Matthew 14:15-18

Mark 6:35-38

Luke 9:12-13

John 6:4-9

But the Apostles saw no way of solving the problem, except by sending the people away for food. Jesus, however, said, "They have no need to go away; give ye them to eat." This unexpected suggestion raised at once the question of the food supply then available. Note the steps by which Jesus cleared the way for what He had in mind to do. First, it was made clear that the people had no food. Next, through inquiry of Philip, it was shown to be impossible to buy food for them. Finally, Jesus commanded that they bring to Him what food any one might chance to have. Through Andrew's observing attention to individuals, a lad was found, having five barley loaves and two fishes; and this food was brought to Jesus.

With that food Jesus fed the multitude. There were four points in the deliberate procedure of this miracle. Christ organized the people. He commanded them to sit

b. Method of Feeding the Multitude

Matthew 14:19-21

Mark 6:39-44

Luke 9:14-17

John 6:10-13

down in regular order on the grass, in companies of hundreds and of fifties, so that they might easily be served. Next, He handled the food supply. He took what was given Him, gave thanks for it, blessed it, and broke it for the people to eat, probably multiplying it at the time of the breaking. Possibly too, He had purposely

into this criminal execution by the wiles of a wicked woman. This deed was forced upon him, as he thought, by his own foolish oath, which his royal nature resented. It was instigated from a heart of evil vengeance in Herodias, a fact which Herod knew right well. It contradicted his own judgment about John, and wounded his own judicial pride. It clashed with his own religious nature, which stood in superstitious awe of John. With all these facts brooding in his mind, there is no wonder that Herod's memory, imagination, and conscience were busy with thoughts of John, and were ready to accept any suggestion of the re-appearance of that great man of God.

arranged the people in order on the mountain-side so that they could witness this miracle. Then, He distributed the broken food to the people, the Apostles and possibly other disciples helping. He made certain that all, in that great multitude of five thousand men, besides women and children, were fully satisfied. Finally, He commanded them to gather up the unused food,—twelve basketfuls; so that nothing should be wasted. Thus ended one of the most spectacular miracles of all Gospel history.

That such ministry should deeply impress the people is not a wonder. For the moment popular convictions were pronounced.

3. Results of the Movement

The people had received Christ's gracious words of instruction. They had felt the touch of His healing hand. They had been satisfied with food by His power. "This," they argued, "must be the Prophet of Promise, come at last to Israel." They were of one mind, therefore, to do a thing which Jesus could not allow.

The people wanted to crown Jesus as their King. Three forces in them wrought to that end. In some, as later developments proved, self-interest was the moving cause; for they desired Jesus as a perpetual Benefactor, a Bread-Giver. In others it was gratitude; for they wanted to return honor for blessings received. In others still it was a religious impulse; for, believing Christ to be the Prophet, they wanted to fall in with their religious heritage and hope. The momentum of the occasion was great; for, as John suggests, they tried to take Jesus by force, and make Him King. This movement was regarded by John as the culmination of that great day in the desert. It made a deep impression on the mind of Jesus, as appears from His next public discourse on the Bread of Life. It doubtless was, for the most part at least, well intended. But it implied a totally erroneous conception of Jesus, which must be definitely corrected.

Jesus did not desire to destroy the enthusiasm of the people. He did wish, however, to correct their misconceptions regarding

(2) Gentle Corrective Response of Jesus Matthew 14:22-23 Mark 6:45-46 John 6:15b

Himself. The first thing, at this moment, was to stop their immediate action. Hence Jesus took the whole situation, delicately but firmly, into His own hands. He sent His own disciples (probably the Twelve) away in a boat to Bethsaida in Galilee. He dismissed the multitude, possibly with some kindly word of explanation or exhortation, knowing that He

would later have a more favorable opportunity to explain and correct their error about His own nature and mission. Left thus alone, He withdrew to a mountain to pray, where in the evening He was alone with His Heavenly Father. So twilight and darkness fell upon the day of highest popular response accorded to the Son of God during His three years of public ministry on earth.

3. *The Discourse of Jesus Defining Himself as the Bread of Life.* After the popular movement to make Him a temporal King, it was both logical and necessary that

**Christ's Discourse
on the Bread
of Life**
John 6:22-71

Jesus avail Himself of an immediate opportunity to define His true nature, and His divine mission as the spiritual Savior of the World. This He did "on the morrow," in

His great discourse on the Bread of Life. This discourse was a clarion call to the minds of men, summoning their thoughts back to the things of the spirit.

Christ spoke this discourse to the same people who had tried on the day before to make Him king. On the previous evening the multitude had seen Jesus send away His disciples in the only boat then on the coast. Later, Jesus had dismissed the people. When they returned to the place on the next morning, He was gone.¹³ Noticing that boats had arrived in the morning from Tiberias, the people took these, and came to Capernaum, seeking Jesus, Whom they found in that city. There Jesus addressed them in this discourse.

He spoke to the people about the Bread of Life, calling their minds back to spiritual things. Under this figure of speech, He explained that He was the spiritual Savior of the world. Without mentioning the mistaken zeal of the people on the preceding day, He set up a positive contrast in thought to their erroneous conception of Him as a temporal King. Jesus Christ is a Divine Savior, sent to save and to sustain the souls of men, in and through the life of faith and righteousness. That subject He argued at length in this discourse to the people.

Christ called the people to a definite concern and effort for spiritual things. This call took form immediately in reply to a

¹³He had walked to His disciples on the water early in the evening, as told in Chapter XIII. See Note 1, above.

question of wonder on the part of the people: "Rabbi, when camest Thou hither?" They knew that He had, on the evening before, no boat for the journey.

(1) **Call to Spiritual Concern and Effort** He did not answer this question directly; but He did seize upon this moment of intense popular attention for beginning the message which He had for the people.
John 6:25-27

He began, with a directness that must have surprised them, to analyze their motives for seeking Him again. He said that they had not sought Him again for intellectual reasons, because they had seen the signs which He did. Neither had they come from any spiritual compulsion, rising out of the recognition of His Divine Nature, and the felt-need of His saving grace. They were there because, having eaten of the loaves, and been filled, they desired now a repetition of that bounty. This direct statement, being true, must have been a little embarrassing; but the kindness of Jesus while making it held them for what further He had to say.

"Work not for the meat which perisheth, but for the meat which abideth unto eternal life." Thus Christ said that the proper concern of life was that for spiritual satisfaction. For that a man should labor. The truth is of universal application. For nothing less than this may an intelligent, immortal spirit spend its energies. The Source of that satisfaction is Jesus Christ. Through Him the Father's plans of spiritual life are wrought out for men. They therefore who would have the Bread that abideth unto life eternal must labor to have their relations right with Jesus Christ Who gives and satisfies spiritual life.

(2) **Call to Faith as a Command of God** When Christ commanded them to "work," naturally they wanted to know what to do. Hence they asked, "What must we do, that we may work the works of God?"
John 6:26-27

In answer, Jesus said to them, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him Whom He hath sent." Thus, to the previous analysis of *what* men should seek, Jesus here adds the *how* of spiritual attainment. It comes always through that faith which God requires men to exercise in His Son sent to be their Savior.

The people did not misunderstand this command for faith in Christ. This is seen in that they asked at once for a sign as the

basis of the faith required. They probably had not entirely forgotten the signs and wonders of the previous day. It is more likely that they were merely acting in accord with the motives which Jesus had attributed to them, and were even yet trying to couple present gratification of the body with spiritual obligations of faith.

In fact, the psychology of their request is interesting. With naïve simplicity, or else with a bit of ill-concealed cunning, they requested a sign, in order that they might believe in Christ. Then they prescribed the kind of sign desired. They wanted a tangible sign, something to see. They wanted a convincing sign, such as would compel belief. Coming closer to their real intent, they wanted a particular type of sign; for example, such as the manna which the fathers had received from Heaven. Obviously enough, they wanted Christ to give them bread, as He had done the day before.

In reply, Christ took them at their word, that they really wanted to believe. Then He showed them that they had already received the supreme Sign. God had been more gracious to them than to the fathers. Moses gave the fathers manna, not the true bread. God was giving them His Son, the true Bread from Heaven. The manna was only physical, and satisfied only a temporary physical need. But Christ, the true Bread of Life, a Fact then before their eyes, was spiritual and permanent. Christ was a Divine Satisfaction, sent into the world to save and to satisfy spiritual life with permanent satisfaction.

By this time the people were beginning to get the spiritual meaning of the Bread of Life. Hence they requested, "Lord, evermore give us this bread." From that point of interest, Jesus analyzed for them the central truths in the plan of salvation.

Working inductively, He began with the relation between Christ and Man in the plan of salvation. Christ, on His part, as the Bread of Life, is able to satisfy all men. "I am the Bread of Life," He said: "he that cometh to Me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst." Man, on his part, is responsible for recognizing and accepting Christ, Who, as the Son of God, living, teaching, and

**a. Request for
a Sign**

John 6:30-31

**b. Superior Privi-
lege Their Ground
for Faith**

John 6:32-33

**(3) Statement of
the Plan of
Salvation**

John 6:34-40

**a. Christ and Man
in the Plan
of Life**

John 6:35-36

ministering before the eyes of men, was His own supreme and convincing sign within Himself. The last and severest charge against men, then and now, is that they, because of spiritual blindness or deadness in sin, should fail to recognize and respond to the Divine Personality of the Son of God. Hence the meaning and force of Christ's words: "But I said unto you, that *ye have seen Me, and yet believed not.*" If the sign of Christ Himself failed, they were practically hopeless. Men must recognize and accept Him.

Next Jesus developed the relation, in the plan of salvation, between Christ and the Father. First, the Son of God explained that there was concerted action always between Him and the Father in the saving of souls. Whom the Father giveth (causeth to come) to the Son, them the Son is certain to receive. Between Christ and the Father there is also a complete harmony of Wills in the work of saving souls. Christ came not to carry out an independent purpose, but to carry out the Father's will. That Divine Will, which Christ held in perfect accord, was this: That Christ should save all that come to Him; and that He should raise them up (completely saved, to the praise of God) in the last day. Christ, then, will save: but who will come? That is the next question in the plan of salvation.

That question suggests the note of personal responsibility. In answering that question, Jesus stated the relation between the Will of God to save and the Will of Man to be saved. The Divine Purpose is to save. God wills that men should have eternal life, and so has provided a Way of Life for them. God is pleased that Christ should save completely, even unto the resurrection in the last day. But human responsibility is also a determining factor. Man must behold the Son of God, and recognize Him as such. Man must accept the Son of God as a personal Savior. This is the unvarying condition of life. God wills to save; but Man must rightly express his own willingness to be saved. That right way is only through personal faith in Jesus Christ. Thus, in this analysis, Christ laid a fundamental responsibility upon the hearts of those who would attain eternal life.

The re-actions to the Discourse thus far were of three kinds, representing three groups then present,—the Jews who were

b. Christ and the Father in the Plan of Life
John 6:37-39

c. Divine Will to Save vs. Human Will to be Saved
John 6:40

there to oppose, the disciples who were perplexed at Christ's teachings, and the Twelve Apostles, whose loyalty Christ brought under test. Some of these matters belong to the next two chapters, and will be noticed there; but they belong here also, in as much as they were spoken in the hearing of all the people.

**3. Three Re-Actions
to This Discourse**
John 6:41-71

The opposition of the Jews showed the spirit of resentment. It expressed itself in murmuring complaints, and in animated debate. Probably their animosity was aroused by seeing the success with which Jesus called the minds of men away from temporal desires to Himself as the Bread of spiritual life.

**(1) Resentment
of the Jews**
John 6:41-59

They therefore "murmured concerning Him, because He said, 'I am the Bread which came down out of Heaven.'" They could not, or would not, see the spiritual meaning of His words; and so they propagated their complaints among the people. Insisting upon a literal and physical interpretation, these enemies refused to regard Jesus as more than the well-known son of Joseph and Mary; and with this argument they opposed His Kingdom in the hearts of those who might believe on Him.

**a. Murmuring of
the Jews
Concerning Jesus**
John 6:41-42

But the Son of God knew their thoughts, and made reply. He re-assured His hearers of the truth of His position. "Murmur not among yourselves," He said, suggesting that a satisfactory explanation was easily possible to them who would hear. As an answer to the complaints, He restated the Way of Salvation, beginning with its necessary conditions. Life comes from the Father, Who draws men by spiritual revelations to them and within them. Life comes by personal response to these movements of God upon one's life. Life comes through the work of Jesus Christ, Whom God has sent to save those who believe. Next, He stated the means which God uses in drawing men to Christ. They are drawn by the teachings of God's word of truth, which is always effective when men hear and learn. This truth is learned, however, by the simple study of the Word and response to the Spirit, and not by spectacular revelations of God, which are not granted to men. The final results of being thus drawn to Christ are faith and eternal life.

**(a) Reply of
Jesus: the Way
of Life**
John 6:43-51

This restatement of the truth cut close to the hearts of Christ's enemies, for it placed them in the position of those who had

**(b) Truth of
Jesus: the Bread
of Life
John 6:48-51**

failed to hear and learn the Truth of God. It also showed the people the real cause of this opposition to Christ. Following up His advantage, He re-iterated the truth: "I am the Bread of Life." As such, He is superior

to the ancient manna, which could not give (continued) physical life. Christ, being the Divine Savior sent down from Heaven, is able to give spiritual and eternal life. "I am the living Bread which came down out of Heaven," He affirmed: "if any man eat of this Bread, he shall live for ever: yea and the bread which I will give is My flesh, for the life of the world."

By this symbolical statement He referred to His Death for the world; but His enemies, taking the statement literally, made

**b. Debate of the
Jews against Christ
John 6:52-59**

it the occasion for renewed opposition. They strove among themselves, doubtless with much feeling, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" Thus they closed

their eyes against all the spiritual meaning in these words of the Lord. With this symbolical idea of partaking of a sacrificial offering, any intelligent Jew, instructed in the Word of God, should have been familiar; and Christ continued to use the figure in stating the following truths in reply to their contentions.

First, He insisted that His Death was necessary to eternal life. Men must partake of this Sacrifice. That gives life; and without

**(a) Christ's Death
Necessary to Life
John 6:53-57**

it, there is no life. His broken Body, and His Blood shed for sin, make of Christ true Meat and true Drink. Partaking of these by faith gives the believer a vital union

with Christ, analogous to the deeper spiritual union between the Son of God and the Father in Heaven.

Christ's Death, therefore, is at the center of God's plan of life for men. The Son of God was sent down from Heaven, to give eternal life. He is the Source and sustaining power of that life. God's true provi-

**(b) Christ's Death
God's Plan of Life
John 6:58-59**

sion for life is neither temporal nor temporary bread, as was the manna, of which

the fathers who ate are now dead. Christ gives and sustains spiritual life. He is that spiritual Bread of Life, of which a man may eat and never die.

These symbolical and mystical teachings of Jesus, spoken in the synagogue in Capernaum, were perplexing to many of the

disciples of Jesus present at this discourse. Referring to His doctrine, they said, "This is a hard saying; who can hear (that is comprehend) it?" Perhaps some even of them lacked a full sympathetic confidence. Possibly some also felt a touch of momentary disappointment. They had desired physical bread; and Jesus, in reply, had offered Himself to them as the Bread of Life. Possibly some were even a little discouraged at these profound truths which they could not quite comprehend.

Jesus let them know that He knew their murmuring, and the cause of it; yet He held their minds to the spiritual. His act of divine insight would tend to stimulate their faith in Him. Then He challenged them for still greater faith. They had halted at the suggestion of His coming down from Heaven; but He pointed them to the greater wonder of their possibly seeing Him return to Heaven whence He came. Then He explained to them more definitely that life, as He had considered it, was a thing of the spirit; and that His words were to be understood as referring to the source and results of spiritual life. "It is the spirit that quickeneth," He said, "the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life."

a. Christ's Explanation and Searching Test
John 6:61-66

Then He laid His searching spiritual test upon their souls, pointing with exact truth to the lack of faith in some of their hearts. "But there are some of you that believe not," He suggested. "For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who it was that should betray Him." He knew that God's Spirit had not quickened some of their lives. Hence He affirmed that He had intended in His previous analysis to help them to see their own secret condition of heart. "For this cause," He said, "have I said unto you, that no man can come unto Me, except it be given him of My Father." That solemn application of the truth was a signal for His hearers to act according to the integrity of their faith in Him.

This searching test was effective. It revealed to men their low desires, and their want of spirituality. It marked therefore, with many at least, the turning point in the popular attitude toward the Son of God. It resulted in a definite sifting of the people, and the elimination of those of uncertain faith. Upon hearing this test, "many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him."

b. Turning Point in Popular Favor
John 6:66

Doubtless it was with a heavy heart that Jesus watched the multitude go away. Then turning to His own Apostles, He said, "Would ye also go away?" This was their test. On this day and that previous, they had heard and seen marvelous revelations of Jesus. What was to be their conclusions regarding Him? Doubtless the manner of this question touched the depths of their hearts. How vitally had the Spirit touched their lives? What was the quality and strength of their faith in the Son of God?

Simon Peter saw the significance of Christ's question, and was quick to make reply. In simple confidence Peter replied, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and know that Thou art the Holy One of God."

a. Peter's Reply
John 6:68-69

That conclusion is definite and positive. It recognizes the essential Divine Nature of Jesus Christ. It acknowledges Him as the Source of life and of its sustaining grace. It therefore reflects the deeper meaning of the discourse on the Bread of Life. It announces convictions that are well grounded, first upon faith, and finally upon actual experience. "We have *believed*, and *know*," was the way Peter expressed his own conclusions from experience with the Son of God.¹⁴

This answer showed that Peter's mind and heart were responsive to the Spirit of God. Peter spoke as if his answer represented all of the Twelve Apostles. But it did not fit them all; for they were not all spiritually minded, not all of that deep and certain faith. Even then Judas Iscariot had

b. Pressure upon
Judas Iscariot
John 6:70-71

a watchful eye for material advantage. Jesus knew this fact, though it was still deep in the secret heart of Judas. In order to bring this lurking sin to the surface in this opportune moment of decisions, Jesus said, "Did not I choose you the Twelve, and one of you is a devil?" This He said about Judas, and doubtless with some subtle suggestion of the personal reference.

Why was this pressure made at this time? Possibly Jesus desired, thus in advance, to give a self-revelation to Judas, so that he might repent of this secret sin in his heart. Possibly Jesus, knowing the hopelessness of that hope, tried thus early to eliminate Judas from among the Twelve, as He actually did do at

¹⁴For further consideration of this passage, see Chapter XIII, as indicated under Note 1 above in this Chapter.

the Passover Supper in the Upper Room during the Passion Week.¹⁵ Certainly, in an ultimate way, the Son of God desired here and now to record this fact of divine insight into the heart of Judas as a defence of His own Divine integrity for all time. What the effect of this test was upon Judas the record does not state; but some Bible scholars have thought that Judas never forgot the fact that the Lord Jesus had seen into the secret depths of his sinful heart.¹⁶

4. *The Final Definition of True Life, as Given by Christ.* This period of popular propagation of the Kingdom very properly closes with a final word of the Lord as to the nature of that true life which He came to give to the world. This truth of life was given in response to a charge of the scribes and Pharisees, that the disciples of Jesus were violating the sacred laws of religion, in that they were eating without first washing their hands. These subtle charges, and the profoundly searching replies of Jesus, will be more fully outlined in the latter part of the next chapter. They are mentioned here only as the occasion for the following statement about the nature of life, which was made before all the people.

Meaning of Life
Matthew 15:1-20
Mark 7:1-23

In answer to these charges against His Apostles, Christ discussed the nature of true life, in a way to clear up any misconceptions held by His hearers. True life, in His thought, was a thing of the spirit. It was in the heart, and not a matter of externals. Even in religion, external observances are far from the essential thing. They may become in themselves sinful. True life is not form, and show, and material substance. It is none of these things.

1. Life Not a
Matter of Externals
Matthew 15:1-9
Mark 7:1-13

Life is a vital thing in the heart of man. Turning away from His assailants on this occasion, Jesus developed this positive truth of life before the people who had come to hear Him speak. He showed them that true life is from within, and issues from the heart. He showed how all things of enduring moral and spiritual worth in life rise from the depths of hearts that are sincere and pure. He explained that the Jews were persecuting Him because their own hearts were full of evil, so that they could not see the glory of

2. Life a Vital
Thing in the Heart
Matthew 15:10-14
Mark 7:14-16

¹⁵See Chapter XIII, pages 313-315.

¹⁶For fuller study of Judas, see pages 141, 261-2, 313-5, 492-3, 541.

the Son of God in their very midst. He affirmed that the Jews, lacking truth and life within their hearts, were blind guides, groping in a system of error that was doomed to self-destruction. The chapter closes with this emphasis upon the heart, and the inner spiritual life, as the matters of supreme consideration.

CHAPTER XII

THE OPPOSITION OF THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES

"Son of Man, Thou dwellest in the midst of a rebellious house, which have eyes to see, and see not; they have ears to hear, and hear not: for they are a rebellious house." *Ezekiel 12:2; Matthew 12:25; 1. John 5:1; and Galatians 3:7.*

"If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both Me and My Father." *John 15:24.*

"Not as though the Word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel." *Romans 9:6.*

"As concerning the Gospel, they are enemies for your sakes. . . . For . . . ye . . . have now obtained mercy through their unbelief." *Romans 11:28-30.*

"If this counsel or this work be . . . of God, ye cannot overthrow it." *Acts 5:38-39.*

This chapter, which is parallel with Chapter XI, surveys also, but from a different point of view, the Galilean Ministry from the Sermon on the Mount to the departure of Jesus and His Apostles into the regions of Tyre and Sidon.¹ In the previous chapter the interest was centered in the popular propagation of the Kingdom of Christ. In this chapter the central interest is the opposing movement of the scribes and Pharisees against the advancement of the Kingdom of Christ in the hearts of men.

In order rightly to understand the contents of this chapter, it is necessary to observe that a new thing had happened. When

New Movement: the Second Stage of Opposition

Christ had organized His Kingdom, the scribes and Pharisees entered upon a new stage of their opposition to the Son of God. Hitherto the opposition to Him had been a matter of personal acceptance or of personal rejection. Jesus Christ had presented Himself to the people in His earlier ministry, with many infallible proofs of His Divine Nature. Many had accepted Him. But the rulers of the Jews, as a rule, had rejected Him individually and personally. They probably would have been content with that rejection, had the ministry and the appeal of Christ continued to be of that personal nature which characterized His work before the formal organization of His Kingdom.

¹For the parallelism of these chapters, see Chapter XI, note 1, which gives the order of events in this period of the Lord's ministry.

But a new situation had suddenly arisen. Christ had organized a Kingdom, making therein ample provisions for permanent and unlimited extension of His work in the world. Opposition at once became more than a personal matter. Hitherto it had been enough for His enemies that they should reject Jesus from their own individual minds and hearts. Henceforth they must oppose the progress of His organized Kingdom in its efforts to get hold upon the hearts of men. Christ said little about the extension of His Kingdom as such; but the leaders of the Jews saw clearly what His work now meant. They saw that the vital work of Christ, suddenly become constructive in a new sense, had come to stay; and that they must prepare to compete against the power of Christ at the bar of popular conviction, and at the door of the human heart.

New Situation Confronting Enemies of Christ

This new situation gave rise to new tactics on the part of Christ's enemies. The opponents in Galilee were re-inforced by leadership from Jerusalem. Their new and definite purpose was not to reject Christ personally. That they had done already. They determined now, if possible, to prevent the

New Tactics of the Enemy

spreading of His newly organized Kingdom. Their purpose was to prevent men from uniting with that Kingdom. But back of this purpose was the immediate problem of preventing men from accepting Jesus Christ as the Son of God. To solve this problem these enemies were compelled to set themselves, blindly enough of course, against the work of God's Spirit in the hearts of men. The point and method of attack in this movement of opposition was always the same. In every case of opposition in this chapter, His enemies tried so to discredit Jesus before the people that they would not believe in Him as the Son of God.

This new opposition was prosecuted, as a rule, with great vigor. Four definite attacks were made upon Jesus during the

Four Attempts to Discredit the Son of God

period covered by this chapter, each attack being a deliberate effort to discredit some phase of Christ's Divine Personality. Clearly the enemies of Christ saw that His Divine Nature as the Son of God must be the center of their opposition, if they would defeat the acceptance of Him and His Kingdom in the hearts of men. But the Lord Jesus was quite equal to, and always ready for, this new form of opposition. His essential Nature as the Son of God shines with full splendour in and through the triumphant manner in which He, speaking al-

ways in His own divine wisdom and power, met these varying assaults of His enemies. Nor did He forget the ultimate issue of His Kingdom. Most of these clashes with His enemies were in the presence of the people; and Jesus made every fact and argument advanced in His own defence an argument for the faith and loyalty of those who heard Him speak.

I. The Attempt to Discredit the Divine Insight of Jesus

The first expression of hostility toward Jesus in this period was an adverse criticism in the house of Simon the Pharisee.

Issues of Opposition Defined in House of Simon the Pharisee
Luke 7:36-50

This criticism, at first only a secret thought in the mind of Simon, was brought into the open by the insight of Jesus Himself. The incident draws the definite line of battle concerning the Nature of Jesus Christ, and shows that He approached the impending struggle with no thought of fear in His mind as to the outcome. It shows Him, in fact, to be in full control of the whole situation, and to be ready even for effective offensive measures against His enemies.

Two initial facts give rise to this criticism. One of the Pharisees, Simon by name, desired Jesus to eat with him. And Jesus "entered into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat." Simon's motive for this invitation is not stated. "And behold, a woman which was in the city, a sinner; and

1. Jesus a Guest in Simon's House
Luke 7:36-38

when she knew that He was sitting at meat in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster cruse of ointment, and standing behind at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head, and kissed His feet, and anointed them with the ointment." That was the situation, the setting of the stage for what was to follow.

Simon knew the woman, that she had lived a sinful life. He seems to have thought it repulsive that any self-respecting person should knowingly receive such devotions from such a woman. Simon's mind was at least receptive to arguments against Jesus, if not indeed actively looking for them.

2. Simon's Hostile Reflection on Jesus
Luke 7:39

Hence his hostile reflection: "This Man, if He were a prophet, would have perceived who and what manner of woman this is which touched Him, that she is a sinner." His central thought was to discredit the divine insight of Jesus. At least Simon thought he saw Jesus in this dilemma: either as wanting in divine

insight, or else guilty of low moral standards and possible social contamination.

The reply of Jesus was a defense of His divine character. Simon was thinking within himself, "If this man were a prophet, —if He only knew the facts; if He had the insight even of a prophet, not to say of a God, as He claims,—He would not permit this indiscretion." That secret thought was

**3. Reply of Jesus
by Divine Insight
Luke 7:40-47**

in Simon's heart. Turning to him, Jesus read that secret thought exactly. That very act of divine insight was a point-blank reply to the hostile reflection of Simon. It showed too that Simon was reckoning with the Son of God, a fact that meant triumph over all opposition.

But Jesus stopped not without showing greater depths of insight and knowledge. He showed that He knew the woman, her past history, her present motives, and even her present spiritual condition. He defended her, and accepted her devotions, because of His definite knowledge of her life.

**(1) Further Insight
and Knowledge
of Jesus**

He knew Simon equally as well. Simon had failed in the common courtesies of the home. Why? In alluding to this failure, Jesus may have delicately pointed to an unholy motive in Simon for extending this invitation to Jesus. Beneath the surface, there was something wrong; and Jesus seems to have located that wrong deep in the untouched, unmoved heart of Simon.

The case of Simon shows how delicately Jesus Christ could touch human life. Simon at heart was not friendly, it seems. Jesus reproached him for his failures in point of hospitality, and dissected his heart that was so self-complacent in its errors: yet He did this without giving offense. He had

**(2) Case of Simon
Luke 7:39-47**

Simon commit himself to certain truths of forgiveness and love; and then delicately handled facts so that Simon would be compelled to see himself condemned under those approved principles. Jesus spoke in definite detail about the woman; and then, generalizing the truth, he left Simon to make his own application. Only divine things can be done so finely.

The full results of this incident are not given. The woman received re-assurance of forgiveness and a benediction from Jesus. What Simon thought, or said, or did, the record does not say, unless he is included in the response of those at the table. Probably they were all Pharisees and their response is significant.

**4. Results
Luke 7:48-50**

They marveled at the facts, but resented the great Fact of Christ's Divine Nature as the cause of all that had happened. They had thought that He did not know the facts of sin in the woman; else that sin would have deterred His acceptance of her devotions. But He showed, first, that He did know the facts, and further, that sin did not count with Him when hearts were sincere and honest; for He could go beyond sin in His power to forgive sins. In this manner of reply, His opponents probably saw that they must come out into the open with a direct public attack upon His Divine Nature. That, at any rate, was the thing they next tried to do.²

II. The Attempts to Discredit the Divine Nature of the Son of God

From the house of Simon, with the line of battle clearly defined, the opposition was brought into the open before all the people. On the one side was Jesus Christ, quietly building His Kingdom in the hearts of men. On the other side were the enemies of Christ, now re-inforced by scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem, and fully determined that the progress of that Kingdom shall be hindered, and stopped altogether if possible. Around them, as witnesses of the struggle, stood the people, whose hearts were to be won or lost as the primary issue of the battle.

The methods of Jesus were always simple and direct. He brought Himself, His divine personality, His word of truth, His ministry of love, into touch with the people, thereby inspiring them with faith, and planting in their hearts the seeds of the Kingdom. To that Kingdom men naturally responded with favor, except for two hindering causes. Some precluded it by a secret love of evil. Some held a pre-fixed attitude of opposition, arising out of personal and selfish interests which an acceptance of the Kingdom would contradict. Otherwise, the touch of Christ upon the mind and heart enlightened the soul into sympathetic responses of faith, love, and service. That is, when Christ knocks at the door He finds an entrance, unless the heart is wilfully closed against Him. With this power of truth in His favor, Jesus faced the opposition of His enemies

²For a discussion of these materials from another point of view, see Chapter XI, pages 238-239.

on this occasion, doubting nothing as to the ultimate issues of the conflict.

The scribes and Pharisees had three causes for their opposition at this time. One cause was their deadening sin, which blinded their eyes to the truth. Hence they lacked both light and conscience to respond to the right. A second cause was their religious perversity. They were so wedded to the stereotyped forms and things of religion, that they failed to see the God that stood in their midst in the Person of Jesus Christ. Hence the more blind they were the more holy would they consider their zeal in opposing the Son of God. The third cause was their far-reaching selfish interests. They saw clearly that the success of Christ's Kingdom would mean their own undoing. Hence they must thwart the work of that Kingdom. For all these reasons, they felt that they must prevent the faith of Christ from further entering the hearts of men. To do so, they made this direct attack upon the Divine Nature of the Lord Jesus, attempting thus to discredit His Divine Personality and Power before the people.

The scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem seem to have come with a well-thought-out plan, which they lost no time in putting into operation against Jesus. Their first purpose was to discredit the Son of God by declaring Him to be in league with Satan, and working in the power of Beelzebub, the Prince of Devils. If that failed, they would then try to discredit Jesus by subtly scorning His claims to Divinity. They would introduce, before the people, what they might make to appear as a physical fact; namely, that Jesus was only a familiar neighbor, whose relatives were well known throughout the Province of Galilee. But on both counts Jesus was ready for their attacks, as will appear in the following analysis.

1. *The Attempt to Bring Christ into League with Satan.* The first attempt of the scribes and Pharisees was to establish in the minds of the people the idea that Jesus was in league with Satan, and had power for working wonders from that evil source. In answer to this charge, Jesus first analyzed the fatal attitude thus assumed by the scribes and Pharisees, and then made a counter-statement of their supreme spiritual and intellectual needs.

Motives of Christ's Enemies

Points of Present Attack

Records of the Attack Matthew 12:22-45 Mark 3:19-30 Luke 11:14-36

Eight times already Jesus had come face to face with His enemies; and gradually they had shown more clearly the lack of everything in their hearts by which they might favorably respond to the Divine touch of Christ upon their lives.³ Personally, they had positively rejected Christ. That was fatal. But in this new movement against the work of Christ, they assumed an extreme attitude that was both fatal and unforgivable.

**1. Fatal Attitude
of the Scribes
and Pharisees**

Matthew 12:22-37

Mark 3:19-30

Luke 11:14-23

This new and extreme attitude came to light during one of Christ's busiest days in this part of His Galilean ministry. From this general busy background, the particular center of interest emerges gradually. The Lord and His Apostles, because of pressing work, were too busy to eat bread. There was, however, a slight interruption by certain "friends," who took exception to something in the manner of Jesus. "Then was brought unto Him one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb: and He healed him, inasmuch that the dumb man spake and saw. And all the multitudes were amazed, and said, 'Is this the Son of David?' " This question was doubtless spoken with a strong affirmative suggestion. The effect, when it fell upon the alert ear of the Pharisees, who were there for the purpose of opposition, was to bring them out into the open with their extreme feeling toward the Son of God.

**(1) Occasion of
This Fatal Attitude**
Matthew 12:22-23
Mark 3:19-21
Luke 11:14

These enemies of Christ did not attempt to deny His miracles. They knew such denial to be futile in the presence of facts. The Pharisees therefore offered the following explanation of Christ's power in the miracle just performed: "This Man doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of devils." The purpose of this bringing of Christ into league with Satan was to disparage the idea of Christ's Divinity in the minds of His hearers. The opposition was therefore directed immediately against the

**(2) Extreme View
of the Pharisees**
Matthew 12:24
Mark 3:22
Luke 11:15

³See the previous discussions of the following passages, and their parallels in the other Gospels: *John* 2:13-25; *Mark* 2:1-12; *Matthew* 9:9-13; 14-17; *John* 5:1-47; *Matthew* 12:1-8; 9-14; *Luke* 7:36-50.

These passages show that the opposers of Christ were wanting in the following particulars. They lacked sincerity in religion, a sense of human pity, and the response of faith in Christ. They discredited the testimony of their own five senses, rejected the authority of Christ's teachings, and perverted the truth of God. They had neither moral nor spiritual sympathy. They had no love of God in their hearts, no sensitiveness to sin, and no experience of forgiveness. They had no right conception of worship, and no right practice in it. They had no just conception of either the nature or the function of law, and no working conception of love and mercy.

Person of Christ, but ultimately against the progress of His Kingdom in the hearts of His disciples and those who might yet believe in Him.

Therein was the unpardonable element in this new form of opposition: not that it defamed Christ, but that it attempted to prevent His entrance into the lives of others. These scribes and Pharisees had already "spoken against" Jesus Christ. They had positively rejected Him. But even an attitude of rejection, theoretically at least, might, by divine patience and sufficient enlightenment, be changed into conviction and faith. Even in unbelief men are still human. But the whole nature changes when men "speak against" (in opposition to) the Spirit of God and His voice of conviction in the heart. By such opposition men become competitors against God's Spirit for the hearts of others. Men thus make themselves opposers of God, thereby classifying themselves as demons and not men.

Such opposition brings men into a position toward which God, even in His mercy, can extend neither patience, nor compassion, nor forgiveness. Men may still be human when they go down to death through unbelief. But they are Satanic, and not human, when they willfully drag others down to death by preventing or even hindering their faith in Jesus Christ. That is the unforgivable sin of belying, and defaming, and contradicting the voice of God's own Spirit when He speaks conviction in the hearts of men. Such sin makes men allies of Satan, the irreconcilable Arch-Enemy of Christ and His Kingdom of Life and work of grace in the hearts of men. Such sin, in the nature of things, is unpardonable.

The scribes and Pharisees tried to discredit the Divine Nature of Jesus. He was not the Son of God, they said, as the Spirit was testifying in the hearts of His hearers. That testimony, they said, was all false: Jesus was in league with Satan. That charge called forth a powerful self-defense from the Son of God, Who set forth, in His answer, a convincing analysis of His own Nature and power, and also of the nature and needs of His enemies.

They felt no thrills from God's great purposes which had worked through their race, and were then making a radical transition from an old to a new dispensation of Grace. Forsaking the high calling of God, and truth, and righteousness, they made their sacred religion subservient to their own interests, and sought therein praise for themselves more than glory to their God. They, having forsaken the way of the Lord, had neither the qualifications nor the will to recognize the Son of God, Who had repeatedly demonstrated His Divine Nature before their eyes.

The Lord Jesus stated first the fundamental facts about Himself. In direct answer to the charge of His enemies, He affirmed

**a. Fundamental
Facts about Jesus
Christ**

Matthew 12:25-30

Mark 3:23-27

Luke 11:16-23

and proved that He could not be in league with Satan. Christ built His argument upon the axiomatic truth that a house or kingdom divided against itself cannot stand. Satan's kingdom, therefore, is not divided. Christ must be either with Satan or else against him. But Christ, in casting out devils, has been working against Satan's kingdom. Christ must therefore be opposed to Satan, and not in league with him. This conclusion was final beyond appeal; but Jesus desired to give a more positive and constructive answer.

He therefore affirmed that He was working in the power of God. Indeed, as respects this question, there were but two al-

**(a) Christ's Power
from God**

Matthew 12:25-27

Mark 3:23-26

Luke 11:16-19

ternatives: either Christ cast out devils in the power of Beelzebub, or He cast them out in the power of God. But the question arises, How are devils cast out? It must be by opposition, as already proved. If the sons of the Pharisees cast out devils (supposing they did such), it must be by the Spirit of God, as they themselves would readily insist. That same truth must apply also to Christ; for Satan's kingdom is not divided. Neither is God's Kingdom divided. But Christ and the Pharisees are opposed the one to the other. God's Spirit cannot thus work in opposition to itself. This triangle of opposition makes it impossible that both Christ and His enemies should be working with God. Who then is in league with God, and who with Satan? That resolves itself into the question of who really casts out evil spirits. That being true, the proof of Christ's alliance with God stands there before all the people in the person of the blind and dumb demoniac completely restored by Jesus; and in that fact was an end of the argument.

**(b) Christ's Three
Truths about
Himself**

Matthew 12:28-30

Mark 3:27

Luke 11:20-23

To make the matter more pointed, however, Christ drew three formal conclusions about Himself, all of which follow, by logical necessity, from the truth already established. First, Jesus Christ represents the Kingdom of God in the world, with which the scribes and Pharisees are now in opposition.

Further, Jesus Christ is opposed to Satan, and superior to him, as is fully proved by the healing of the demoniac on that occa-

sion. Finally, Jesus Christ is the One with Whom every man must reckon in defining his attitude toward God. Christ stands at the point of decision. "He that is not with Me is against Me." Christ is the Center of all co-ordination and co-operation in divine faith and service. "He that gathereth not with Me scattereth." There is therefore, without a favorable attitude toward Christ, no hope of favorable relations with God. That truth Jesus meant for the Pharisees, and the people also, to learn from His answer thus far.

But why did not the scribes and the Pharisees yield themselves thus to Christ? The reasons lay within their own hearts.

b. Fundamental Facts about the Scribes and Pharisees

Matthew 12:31-37

Mark 3:28-29

Knowing this to be true, Jesus turned next, with unsparing analysis, to the fundamental facts about the scribes and Pharisees. His motives for prosecuting the case still further were probably of two kinds. He never left men in error and complacent delusion, without throwing new light upon the truth that applied to their conditions. Furthermore, these events happened before all the people. The Lord did not therefore consider His answer to the charge of His enemies as complete until He had clearly shown why they had offered such opposition to His work of grace in the hearts of the people. He accepted, as it were, the challenge of competition for the people's faith, and then dealt His opponents a stunning blow by showing that their motives were of evil origin, and that they themselves were in league with Satan.

Christ showed first that the scribes and Pharisees were opposed to the Spirit of God. They were therefore in a perilous position before God. Most sins, such as

(a) Christ's Enemies Opposed to God's Spirit

Matthew 12:31-32

Mark 3:28-29

Cf. Luke 12:10

common violations of moral law, general blasphemies, and even opposition to the Son of God, are, in the mercy of God, pardonable. But some sins, because of their very nature, cannot be pardoned. Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is unpardonable; because it defames and contradicts the Agent of Divine approach to the spirit of man. Opposition to the Holy Spirit, such as denying, contradicting, or speaking against, His testimony and work in the hearts of men, is unpardonable. That form of sin makes the opposer of the Spirit a competitor against God, and an ally of Satan, respecting convictions of truth and responses of faith in human hearts. All of these sins are involved in this

extreme act of Christ's enemies, when they, as a means of disparaging faith in Him, charge Him with having an unclean spirit, and working in the power of Satan. They thereby work against God, and for the spiritual destruction of men's souls, which efforts are Satanic and therefore unpardonable.

Christ showed further that this extreme and fatal opposition of the scribes and Pharisees was the direct fruitage of their evil natures. *Like produces like*, is the universal law by which spiritual leadership must be tested. Before the attitude of the scribes and Pharisees can be changed, their minds and hearts must be changed. They were evil men. Christ pronounced them an "offspring of vipers." Being evil, they cannot speak other than evil. Because of evil, they had rejected the Son of God. Because of it, they were denying and defaming the Holy Spirit of God. Because of it, they were set against the Kingdom of God. Because of it, they were willing, for the sake of their own personal ends, to prevent others from accepting the Way of Life, thereby sacrificing the souls of others to eternal death.

Christ's criterion of judgment is just. Such evil, in word and deed, does arise out of the essential nature of man. Deep in their hearts, His enemies were in league with Satan, and Christ knew them through and through. These were severe judgments; but Christ was here only giving a solemn warning. He had in reserve deeper searchings of their hearts, and judgments far more severe, with which He met the later opposition of these scribes and Pharisees.⁴ Even yet, in this fearful warning, Christ holds out to His enemies an offer of hope.

And He did more. In a positive and constructive way, He analyzed their needs, and gave them a definite prescription. In a word, they needed spirituality,—a new spiritual attitude, sympathy, discernment, and responsiveness. Then might they hope to learn the truth, respond to the Spirit, and accept the Son of God. They needed some point of contact for divine things in their lives. As Christ saw the situation, the scribes and Pharisees especially needed two things: a moral and spiritual change in their hearts; and a radical change in their minds respecting the conditions of acceptance with God and of eternal salvation.

(b) Christ's
Enemies Essential-
ly Evil
Matthew 12:33-37
Cf. "Tests,"
Chap. X.

2. Supreme Needs
of the Scribes
and Pharisees
Matthew 12: 38-50
Mark 3:31-35
Luke 11:24-36;
and 8:19-21

⁴Chapters XV, XVI, and XVIII.

Their deepest need was moral and spiritual. They needed such a change of heart and moral nature as would make them sympathetic with, and sensitive to, the truth.

(1) Their Spiritual Need: Sensitiveness to Truth Their trouble was deeper than mere sin and ignorance. Such conditions God's truth and grace may overcome: for Christ came to enlighten and to redeem from sin. But the heart of these opposers of Christ was "set" in resistance. They refused to recognize the

truth. They gave no response to the touch of divine grace. The door of their souls was resolutely closed. They denied to God's power any point of responsive contact with their human spirits.

These scribes and Pharisees requested a sign from Jesus. They wanted some spectacular demonstration, or some tangible proof, of Christ's Divinity. Why that request?

a. Request for Sign: Natures Hardened against Truth There is but one answer. It was because truth had no access to their souls. In reply, Jesus showed that their request was due to their evil natures, whose deadness precluded the perception of truth. The very Son of

God was standing in their midst; and their felt-need of an external sign was an open confession of that impurity in heart which prevents men from seeing God. Christ called them an "evil and adulterous" generation. The second member of that charge suggests a double significance. It gives character to their sin; and such sin rapidly perverts moral and spiritual vision. They had evidence enough: the trouble was within themselves. Christ therefore refused to give them any sign, except the facts of His own life and work. These facts they had seen and heard; and for the recognition of that truth which these facts signified they would be held responsible before God.

Their spiritual apathy in not recognizing the Divine Nature of Jesus Christ was due also to their lack of sensitiveness to sin.

b. Spiritual Apathy: Lack of Sensitiveness to Sin Men have always loved darkness and error rather than light and truth when their deeds were evil. The pure in heart are sensitive and responsive to divine things. The law of righteousness, with its incisive definitions of evil, and its ideals of truth, has always

been a schoolmaster to lead men to Christ.

But these conditions of truth were wanting in the scribes and Pharisees, even as they are wanting in sinful men to-day. Christ declared these enemies of His to be less sensitive to sin than the

ancient heathen city of Nineveh. That city had repented at the preaching of Jonah; but these enemies were so set in sin as to withstand the greater power of the Son of God. He affirmed that they had less interest in the truth than was shown by the ancient heathen Queen of the South. She journeyed a long way, and at great expense, to seek the wisdom of Solomon. But they were either indifferent or hostile toward the word of divine truth spoken by the Lord and Savior of the world.

They must change these conditions in their hearts; and they must humbly pay the price of that change. The next words of

**c. Present Status:
a Decadent People
Matthew 12:43-45
Luke 11:24-26**

Jesus were directed against their arrogant and complacent religious pride. He declared them to be a decadent people, a people who had fallen below the ideals of the ancient and favored Nation to which they belonged.

Christ even intimated that these Jewish leaders were even below the level of those ancient heathen nations from among whom Israel had been called and set apart to God and righteousness. That at any rate seems to be Christ's meaning in the comparison with which He illustrated their decadent condition.

He compared them to a man who had been purged of an evil spirit, but into whose purified life the evil spirit had returned, with seven other spirits more evil than himself, making the latter state of that man worse than the first. So it was with the leaders of Israel in that day. In a national sense, God had called the Jews apart as peculiarly His own people, dedicated to a great spiritual mission, and zealous of good works. But this generation had forgotten their high calling. They were in a state of crystalized formalism. They had reached the low level of self-seeking even in their religion. In their alms-giving, prayers, and fasting, as already shown in the Sermon on the Mount, they had left God out of count.

Personally, too, as Christ analyzed their state, they were indifferent to vital life, and unresponsive to the influence of God's Spirit. They sought neither repentance nor righteousness; for they considered themselves already to have attained. They were blind to the fact and the glory of the spiritual, in life, or worship, or God, or His Son. If any had rallied under the recent searching messages of John the Baptist, already they represented the recoil of faint efforts after righteousness. They were indeed, as Christ saw them in their true hearts, a decadent people, having departed from the high calling of their father Abraham, and the spiritual traditions of God's chosen people Israel.

Finally, Jesus showed that these opposing scribes and Pharisees held a perverted philosophical view of the whole plan of salvation. Deepest of all errors, they held

(2) Their Intellectual Need: True Knowledge of the Way of Life wrong notions about the conditions of acceptance and favor with God; and this erroneous philosophy was parent to their still-born religion. This basic error, in its two

phases of present application, Jesus corrected for His enemies amid the stirring interruptions with which this meeting came to a close. In a direct, but very constructive manner, He pointed out to them their need of re-learning the right conditions of blessedness, and the true nature of kinship with the Son of God.

At the basis of their thought was this error. These Jews depended upon a formal descent from Abraham as a sufficient condition and guarantee of acceptance with God.

a. Erroneous Dependence on Descent from Abraham
Luke 11:27-28;
33-36

Since God had made His Covenant with Abraham and his posterity, the Jews seemed to feel that God was bound to grant them perpetual favor. That condition of favor was, at first, highly spiritual;⁵ but it had

degenerated into the easy, convenient, and formal idea of a mere kinship-relation, which these Jewish leaders held at this time, with boastful assurance, as proof that all must be right between themselves and God.⁶ In this position, however, they were far from the truth.

The question of this error rose pointedly from an interruption in the audience. It was a woman who spoke thus publicly to

(a) That Error Voiced by the Woman
Luke 11:27

Jesus. Her mind was schooled in the thought of blessedness flowing from kinship-relations. With this thought in mind, she sat there, listening to the gracious words of Jesus, and responding in spirit to His divine

Personality. That she was herself a mother, is slightly suggested by the turn of her thought. For a long time perhaps she sat listening to those startling words of insight and grace, her whole mind and heart focusing meanwhile upon that blessedness, as she thought, which must attach to the Mother of such a Son! At length, in exact terms of Israel's basic error, her overflowing spirit exclaimed, "Blessed is the womb that bear Thee, and the breasts which Thou didst suck!"

⁵Compare *Genesis* 12:1-3; 15:1, 5-7; 17:1, 19; 22:1-19.
⁶Compare *John* 8:33-47; also *XIV*, pages 347-351.

These words, breaking upon the stillness of His audience, arrested the immediate attention of Jesus, and served as the instant introduction of that fundamental lesson toward which the trend of this entire discourse had pointed. With divine delicacy, in His initial word "Yea," Jesus admitted the blessedness of His own Mother. But that was only an incident to His real reply to this interruption.

(b) That Error
Corrected by
Jesus
Luke 11:28; 33-36

Basis of
Blessedness
Luke 11:28

The truth, for the people, lay in another direction. He saw in that woman's heart the fatal error of her race. Passing lightly over the personal touch in her exclamation, He would correct the error deep in her heart. Therefore His answer, "Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the Word of God, and keep it." In those words He stated clearly the true condition of divine favor: that blessedness results not from kinship-relations, but from knowing and obeying the truth of God.

Then in a few words, Jesus pointed out the duties that follow from this basic truth. He used the figure of a shining lamp to show that the truth of God should be made the guide of the whole life; that the truth, in order to avoid confusion in conduct, should be definite, and well understood; that, with open response, men should seek carefully to know what the truth of God is; and that this truth, when known, should enlighten every part of life, as the one word of authority in matters of faith and practice.

Duties That
Follow
Luke 11:33-36

In a word, Jesus pointed out the indispensable nature of obedience to the law of God, back of which obedience there must be a knowledge of that law, and for which obedience there is no substitute as a condition of divine favor. Neither a boastful descent from Abraham, nor any other kinship relation, could enter the final count: acceptance with God results from obedience, which Christ has already defined as including knowledge, faith, love, and service.

2. *The Attempt to Scorn Jesus As a Mere Neighbor.*⁷ The Jewish leaders had yet to learn another lesson; which, while parallel with the one just learned, came immediately in response to a sudden turn in the point of view from which His enemies

⁷There is at this point an overlapping in the logical outline of events, due to the interruption which (if it was really the work of His enemies), introduced a new angle of attack upon the Divinity of Jesus Christ. The point that follows is only another of those intellectual needs of the Jewish leaders, parallel to (2)a immediately above; but the new attack upon Jesus is thought to be better brought out under the form of analysis followed in this discussion.

made their next attack upon the Son of God. They had miserably failed in their attempt to discredit Christ as in league with Satan, and doubtless had become very uncomfortable under the Lord's searching analysis of their own evil hearts. Possibly they had instigated the interruption by the woman already considered, though that is hardly probable. It is probable, however, that they did have some part in the next interruption, using it as a means of stopping this discourse, which, from their point of view, had already gone too far.

This second interruption followed the first immediately, while Jesus was yet speaking. The former, instead of disconcerting Jesus, instantly gave His unbroken thought

1. Situation and Motive of This Interruption
Matthew 12:46-50
Mark 3:31-35
Luke 8:19-21

a particular turn, and showed His infinite resources for handling any situation. The scribes and Pharisees had been defeated before the people, and were anxious that this discourse be brought to an end. It is highly probable, therefore, that this desire of

Christ's kindred to see Him was at least magnified by His enemies as a means of interruption. They hoped thereby to accomplish two things. They wanted to break off the discourse. They wanted also to discredit Jesus by scorning Him as a mere neighbor whom the people knew quite well. Events seem to show that this view of the matter is correct. If so, the public introduction of Christ's humble kindred at this point, and the magnifying of their concrete presence, was a cunningly devised manner of making an attack upon the Divinity of Jesus of Nazareth.⁸

The recorded facts of the interruption are as follows. While Jesus was yet speaking, His mother and His brethren seem to

2. Manner of Making the Interruption
Matthew 12:46-47
Mark 3:31-32
Luke 8:19-20

have appeared on the out-skirts of the audience, with a desire to see Jesus. Perhaps they had just arrived on the scene: possibly their desire was only beginning to be asserted. Luke suggests that they could not come near Jesus because of the multitude. Possibly they only wanted Him to know that they

were present; and, as Mark suggests, they had passed up to Jesus

⁸The view here advanced does not assume at all that the kindred of Jesus knowingly played into the hands of His enemies. It is only necessary to assume that His enemies took advantage of this presence of His kindred, possibly to suggest, and then to magnify, what would seem to the people a spontaneous desire of those kindred. If cunning be once admitted, the possibilities are far-reaching. It is frankly recognized that there is another plausible view of this incident. But this view, seemingly supported by the tone of Christ's reply, adds point to the insistent manner of the interruption at this particular moment.

the word to that effect. Possibly some cunning Pharisees had prompted the message.

It seems almost certain that the message, thus sent up to Jesus, was caught by His enemies, and magnified both in content and in publicity. Finally, some one, probably an enemy, who would here speak with the suppressed joy of anticipated confusion on the part of Jesus, delivered to Him the message: "Behold, Thy mother and Thy brethren stand without, seeking to speak to Thee." The speaker, it will be observed, was careful to emphasize the physical necessity of an interruption of His discourse if Jesus would comply with this desire of His kindred.

But the Son of God was not in this manner to be confused. It seems that He saw at once an undercurrent connection between that message and the mind of His enemies. Replying directly to the man who delivered the message, Jesus asked one question which touched the heart of the whole situation. "Who is My mother? and who are My brethren?" That question, for it is one question in meaning, His enemies dared not attempt to answer; for in it Jesus called their minds back to the spiritual. If they planned to humiliate Him through the flesh, then His direct answer was to exalt Himself in point of fact as belonging essentially to the realm of the spirit.

Jesus of Nazareth was the Son of God. True kinship with Him, therefore, must be spiritual kinship. That is what His direct question at this time signified. That necessary spiritual kinship His enemies must re-learn. Mere personal and formal relationships did not count. Then pointing to His own disciples, in a way to give concrete emphasis to this truth of spiritual relationships, He exclaimed: "Behold, My mother and My brethren!" He probably paused here an instant, until the people had turned about in their mental attitude from the thought of His human nature to that of His divine nature. Then He stated, in more general terms, that true kinship with Him must rest upon a spiritual basis. Kinship with the Son of God is a matter of hearing the Word of God, and of doing the Will of God: it is a matter of knowing the truth, and of putting that truth to practice in daily life. "For," said Jesus in His unanswerable conclusion, "whosoever shall do the will of My Father Which is in Heaven, he is My brother, and sister, and mother."

With these words Jesus closed one of the most direct and com-

**3. Triumphant
Reply of the Son
of God**
Matthew 12:48-50
Mark 3:33-35
Luke 8:21

**Spiritual Kinship
with the Son
of God**

plete character-analyses ever addressed to those analyzed. It was fearless, unsparing, and triumphant. Yet it was sympathetic in the deeper sense. Above all, Jesus tried to show His enemies wherein they were wrong, and why they were wrong. He pointed out to them the perils of their extreme position, and urged them to see their errors, and to repent. His message here was one of warning and instruction, more than of judgment. But in two senses His answer here was final. It was an ultimatum of truth. His enemies must decide their own fate. It was a final answer on the charge in question. Henceforth, Jesus paid little attention to the repeated charge that He was in league with Satan.

III. The Attempt to Discredit the Teachings of Jesus

The previous attempts to cast aspersions upon the Divine Personality of Jesus Christ had miserably failed. His replies seem, for the time at least, to have put His enemies to silence. They were, however, only silent, and not inactive, at least not so in their minds and hearts. His work went on with increasing popular success; and their resentment continued to grow. They kept in touch with the daily ministry of Jesus, watching always for any hopeful occasion for open opposition to Him and the advancement of His Kingdom. Their next effort was to discredit the teachings of the Son of God, and thereby to bring Him and His work into disrepute, as they hoped.

The next movement in this opposition was an attempt to deny the truthfulness of certain statements of Jesus concerning Himself as the Bread of Life.⁹ Two statements in particular, as already stated in the previous discussion of this passage, were the central points of this attack. The object was to discount the truth and the authority of Christ's teachings in the minds of the people, who had been deeply moved by His message on this occasion. Evidently their hope was, that they might in this way hinder the work of Christ's Kingdom.

These hostile Jews had listened closely to Christ's analysis of Himself as the Bread of Life which had come down from Heaven. Naturally their resentment rose against the idea of His Divine origin and nature. They attempted to discredit this truth

⁹See *John* 6:22-71; also Chapter XI, pages 258-262, where this passage was discussed. The purpose here is not to repeat that discussion, but to emphasize the purposes and methods of Christ's enemies on this occasion.

by citing what seemed to be obvious facts. They did not charge Jesus openly to His face with false statements. Their plan on

**1. Murmuring
against Christ's
Divine Origin
and Nature
John 6:41-51**

this occasion was to conduct a quiet campaign of contradiction directly among the people. The Jews, therefore, to individuals and possibly to small groups in the general audience, murmured against Jesus. They were especially active in contradicting the

idea that Jesus "came down out of Heaven." They considered this a false statement; and they sought to establish their own contention by citing the well-known identity of Jesus as a member of the family of Joseph and Mary. By this contradiction the Jews hoped to overthrow the people's confidence in the teachings of Jesus, and thus to hinder His work in their hearts.

But they did not succeed. Jesus replied in His characteristic manner. He first called the opposition out into the open, re-

**Hostile Jews
Blind to
Spiritual Facts**

fusing always to have things done in a corner. He then addressed Himself to the basic needs of His opponents. They lacked spirituality and spiritual discernment. They had

seen, or at least were trying to make the people see, only a human neighbor, when the Son of God was standing immediately before them. They were not in touch with God, and were not "taught of God." Else they should have recognized and accepted Christ; for, as He said, "Every one that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto Me." There was the secret of all their difficulty. To see the truth, they needed to open their hearts to the truths of God and to the things of the Spirit. Christ was the Bread of Life, and from Heaven too; but they did not see the truth of these things, and seemingly did not care to see that truth.

The Jews probably saw the drift of Christ's reply, and feared its effect upon the people. Hence the apparently deliberate effort

**2. Striving Still
to Exalt the
Physical in Jesus
John 6:52-59**

of the Jews to hold the mind of the people to the purely physical conception of Jesus and His teaching about the Bread of Life. They ignored all that Christ said about the spiritual significance of His symbolical state-

ments, and seized upon one suggestion of His about eating His flesh. With great excitement, it seems, they magnified the enormity of this idea as a physical impossibility. They failed entirely, or else refused to see Christ's true meaning, that they must spiritually partake of His Death.

In reply, Jesus re-affirmed the necessity of recognizing the spiritual, and called the people definitely to that recognition. He continued to speak in terms of this familiar Jewish symbolism. He declared again that *He was Bread from Heaven*, different from the ancient Manna, and superior to it, in that He was a source of true life in the world. He insisted again that they must partake of His flesh and His blood, as the only Way of Life. He further stated that, by such participation in His Death, a mystic union was formed with the Son and the Father, whereby men might hope for complete attainment in spiritual life.

It should be observed that Jesus was speaking quite within His right when He used such symbols in His words to the Jews, and insisted upon their understanding His meaning. For millenniums such symbols had been familiar to Jewish thought; and their spiritual meaning was a common thought throughout the ancient Word of God. The purpose of Jesus in using this form of expression was, therefore, to put His enemies thus concretely to the test as to their real touch with the Mind and the Spirit of God as revealed in their own Scriptures.

In this way Christ showed His enemies that they were not "taught of God." Neither had they "heard from the Father, and . . . learned." And because they were out of touch with God and His teachings, they were even now refusing to accept His Son Jesus Christ. After re-stating the truth in terms of these testing symbols, Jesus turned to His own disciples, leaving His enemies to their own thought, and to the seeking of other methods of opposing Christ and His Kingdom in the hearts of the people.

IV. The Attempt to Discredit the Religious Practice of Jesus

The final effort of His adversaries in this period was their attempt to discredit Jesus at the point of His religious practice. They claimed that He was approving, if not actually encouraging, the conduct of His disciples in their failure to wash their hands before they ate bread. This was held by the Jews as a violation of sacred religious duty. The charge itself was an echo of the low appeal of the scribes and Pharisees in their effort to prejudice

**Necessity of
Recognizing the
Spiritual**

**Symbolism Used
As a Test**

**Accusation of
Eating with Un-
washen Hands
Matthew 15:1-20
Mark 7:1-23**

the people against Jesus and His Kingdom. The effect of this quibbling about the mere things of religion, standing as it does in such close contrast with Christ's exalted appeal in His discourse on the Bread of Life, is positively pathetic. But such is to be expected from those whose interests rise not above the mere things of religion.

The outline of this incident falls into two parts. In the first, Christ dealt directly with the scribes and Pharisees, answering their charge against His own disciples. In the second, He spoke about His enemies, addressing His message at first to the multitudes, and later and more privately, to His disciples (or Apostles). The purpose of Christ throughout the discourse was to set forth the essential nature of true religious life, which He considered here both in its negative and its positive aspects.

1. The Negative Truth of Religious Life. Christ cleared away, first, certain misconceptions about vital religion, in making His reply to the charge against His disciples.

**1. Circumstances
of This Attack**
Matthew 15:1
Mark 7:1-4

The circumstances of this new attack are significant. The general movement of opposition to the work of Christ among the people had been re-inforced by a new group of scribes and Pharisees, who had come down from Jerusalem to Galilee for this purpose. These newly arrived scribes and Pharisees, being zealous for religious observances according to certain formal traditions, were watchful for an occasion to attack Jesus under the charge of violating some sacred religious duty. This occasion they soon found, in the fact that His disciples failed to wash their hands before they ate bread.

This failure these Jewish leaders made the basis of their complaint to Jesus, therein making Him responsible for this conduct

on the part of His disciples. The plan was carefully considered. The object was to arouse popular religious prejudice against Christ, and thereby to defeat His work, by setting off Him and His Kingdom as opposed to the established and sacred tradi-

**2. Nature of
Charge against
Jesus**
Matthew 15:2
Mark 7:5

tions of the Jewish religion. To do this, these accusers made their indictment very clear, as they thought, analyzing it indeed under a violation of principles and a citation of fact. They asserted that the disciples of Jesus were failing to observe the traditions of the elders, implying, in this general charge, that the disciples had fundamentally set at nought the established religion of Israel. Then, to make good this general charge, these accusers

cited a specific instance of such violation, in the matter of eating with unwashen hands. These things were done in public, for the obvious purposes already stated.

The reply of Jesus was directed toward the underlying trouble which gave rise to these charges. His sufficient answer lay in

3. Reply of Jesus
Matthew 15:3-9
Mark 7:6-13

His exposing the erroneous thought and practice of the scribes and Pharisees respecting the nature and expression of true religion. He did this by showing the impossibility of ever making anything right in life unless there is first a rightness in the hearts of men. He argued at length that all right expression of life and conduct is conditioned upon right moral and spiritual apperception in the heart: for true religious life springs from within out of the heart.

In support of this truth, Christ made a counter-charge against the scribes and Pharisees, showing therein that even their religious observances, for lack of right hearts,

(1) Christ's
Counter-Charge
Matthew 15:7-9
Mark 7:6-7

had become sinful. After analyzing these accusers in terms of ancient prophecy, He showed that they were, for want of true hearts, hypocritical in their pretenses toward honoring God, and that they were worshipping in vain because they had perverted the truth of God. In a word, their religion itself had become both evil and ineffective.

In support of this general statement of their present evil condition, Jesus cited a specific instance wherein their tradition had annulled the Law of God. In this case, as

(2) Christ's Citing
an Evil Tradition
Matthew 15:3, 6
Mark 7:8-13

Christ emphasized, they had not only set aside the Law of God by their tradition, but they had also contradicted that Law, substituting in its stead another of exactly opposite tenor as the rule of life. And in order to magnify the enormity of such an act, Jesus selected, as an example of their evil traditions, one that was intimately connected with their religion on the side of its public expression.

The instance cited was this. In the Law of God, the Fifth Commandment imposes the universal obligation to honor one's parents, with an implied penalty of death to him who fails in this duty. In order to avoid financial obligations that might be incurred under this Law, the Jews invented their tradition of *Corban*, which worked on this wise. Suppose a son having wealth did not wish to pay it out in support of needy parents; then he would nominally dedicate his wealth to religion. This

was called "corban," or "given to God." But the wealth was not in fact given at all: it was only put into such a technical position as to be beyond the reach of any obligations that might arise under the Fifth Commandment. Even the enemies of Jesus seem to have felt the meanness of this tradition when it was exposed by Him; for they had nothing more to say at this time.

2. *The Positive Truth of Life.* Turning then to the general multitude, whom He called nearer to Himself, Jesus began to tell them the meaning of true moral and religious life.

To the multitude, gathered around Him, Christ emphasized that all moral and spiritual results of enduring value in life can come only from the heart. Moral defilement is

**1. Moral and
Spiritual Results
Only from the
Heart
Matthew 15:10-14
Mark 7:14-16**

not a matter of external stimulus. Defilement takes place within the heart; and the moral quality of life results from that which comes from within the heart. This truth cut so close as to give offense to the scribes and Pharisees; but Jesus was unmoved at the

report of their resentment. He only re-affirmed that they must stand or fall under this test of inner integrity of the heart. He declared that, if they were trees planted of God, well and good; but if not, then they were doomed. They lacked truth in their hearts; and, consequently, they lacked life. That Jesus knew full well. They were blind guides of the blind: hence their whole system was doomed to self-destruction. With that gloomy prospect, Jesus brought the public part of this occasion to a close.

To His Disciples, after they had gone into the house, Jesus expounded more fully this parable of personal defilement, showing that "the issues of life" arise from moral

**2. Moral and
Spiritual Results
Depend upon Re-
Actions in the
Heart
Matthew 15:15-20
Mark 7:17-23**

re-actions within the heart. External and physical things in themselves are neither moral or spiritual. They move by fixed natural laws; and even within the body, they are cared for by the natural processes of life. Morality belongs to the spirit-life, and arises only when the spirit-life comes into active

response. What a man is depends upon the good or the evil responses that he gives to the stimuli of his life. It is not what one comes into contact with, but what re-actions he gives, that determines the quality of life.

Finally, Jesus analyzed, as a very fitting conclusion to this chapter, the process of moral decline. The successive stages of that decline, as here outlined, are as follows: Moral decline

begins with evil thoughts in the hearts; such thoughts as lead to the grosser physical sins,—murders, adulteries, fornications, and covetings and thefts. These evil promptings

3. Processes of Moral Decline
Matthew 15:19-20
Mark 7:21-23

in the heart lead naturally to sins of speech, such as false witness, deceit, and railings,—lying and abuse being the common resorts of men to cover up other evils of their na-

tures. Finally, the type of re-action which the heart gives becomes fixed, and the moral nature becomes "set" in so many evil attitudes in life. Inevitably then the degenerate responses of life are characterized by lasciviousness, an evil eye (envy or jealousy), pride and foolishness.

Thus life is made, or unmade, from within. External observances are in themselves non-moral. Results depend always upon that which external things come into contact with in the human heart, and what response comes from the heart. Under this basic law of life, the scribes and Pharisees, for want of sincerity and integrity of heart, had caused that their religion had become a sin. And under this same law, wanting that in their hearts which would respond to the touch of God upon their lives, they had rejected Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and then set themselves to defeat His work of grace in the hearts of others.

CHAPTER XIII

THE INSTRUCTION AND TRAINING OF THE APOSTLES

"For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." *Acts 4:20.*

"Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness." *Isaiah 41:10.*

"That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." *1. John 1:3.*

"How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of Peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" *Romans 10:15.*

This chapter, which is parallel with Chapters XI and XII, deals with the instruction and practical training which Christ gave to the Twelve Apostles during this period of the Galilean Ministry.¹

A Preliminary Statement about This Educative Work. The function of the Apostles has already been outlined in the discussion of their appointment to this high office.² They were chosen to be with Jesus; to know Him personally, experimentally, and authoritatively; to partake of His ministry, with the power of miracles; and to testify of Him to all the world. They were therefore, after their Call to the Apostleship, constantly associated with the Son of God; and thus they had the best possible preparation for their great life-work as His witnesses to all the world.

The methods of this preparation were varied, including personal experience, observation, direct and incidental instruction, and practical training in actual work.

1. Purposes of This Instruction and Training The Apostles seem to have been present, during this period, at all of those great discourses which Jesus delivered to the general public. They heard also His defenses of Himself and of His Kingdom. The accumulation of truth thus brought before the Twelve Apostles was very great; and on the truth thus taught they were sometimes tested by the Lord Jesus. In addition to this incidental instruction, they were given many direct lessons in the truth

¹For the parallelism of these chapters, see Chapter XI, note 1, which gives the order of events in this period of the Lord's ministry.

²See Chapter VI for the Choosing of the Twelve Apostles.

concerning the Nature, and Power, and Mission of the Son of God. The Apostles were also present to observe His own effective methods of work, and to get training from helping Him with His own ministry. They were also given formal instruction in practical methods, and were sent forth, equipped with power, to get that training which comes best from responsibility coupled with vital experience.

The Apostles were quite conscious that they were being educated; and they seem to have been eager to learn the new work to which they had been called. They were attentive to the movements of their Master, and prompt always to carry out His directions. They were very human. They were unable sometimes to comprehend the teachings of Jesus; and once at least they complained at the difficulty thus encountered in His doctrine.³

Sometimes, as in the case of their responses to certain of the Parables, the Apostles asked Jesus privately for further explanation of matters which He had previously taught the people in public.⁴ Sometimes the Apostles were subjected to examinations: group-tests, for knowledge, as at the close of the great day of miracles;⁵ and for decisions of loyalty, as at the close of the Lord's Discourse on the Bread of Life.⁶ They also had personal-tests, for confidence, as in the case of Philip;⁷ and for self-knowledge, as in the case of Judas Iscariot.⁸ Through all of this period the Apostles gave diligent attention to those things of primary importance in the future work of the Kingdom.

I. Observation and Incidental Instruction

The Apostles, as already suggested, from the time they were called to this office, accompanied Jesus constantly in His public and private ministry. They therefore saw His works and heard His words. To state again in full the educational advantages thus enjoyed by the Apostles would be to re-analyze the matter of the last two chapters. That is unnecessary. In briefly summarizing that material, however, it may be noticed that there are three central points about which the results to the Apostles would naturally gather.

³See *John* 6:60-65, and the treatment of this passage in Chapters XI, and XII.

⁴See *Matthew* 13:10; 13:36-43; 15:15-20; *Mark* 4:10; 7:7-23; and *Luke* 8:9; and the discussion of these passages in Chapters XI, and XII.

⁵See *Matthew* 13:51-52; and Chapter XI, pages 248-249.

⁶See *John* 6:66-67; and Chapter XI, pages 261-263.

⁷See *John* 6:5-6; and Chapter XI, page 252.

⁸See *John* 6:68-71; and Chapter XI, pages 261-263.

1. *Personal Experience with the Son of God.* During this period the Apostles had an intimate and soul-enriching personal touch with Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God. This was a necessary condition of their future witness to the world, wherein, when they testified, they spoke not theory nor hearsay but facts *as they knew them*, and conclusions of truth drawn from long and intimate personal contact with the Son of God. Later in this chapter, Peter will be heard to say, "Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and know that Thou art the Holy one of God."⁹

John also emphasized the Apostles' authority arising from actual experience: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of Life; (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ."¹⁰ Having had such experience, these witnesses of Christ cannot but speak the things which they have seen and heard.

2. *Instruction in the Truth.* Incidentally, they thus learned volumes of truth taught by the Son of God. They heard Him state the deep things about His own Divine Nature. They heard Him outline the Way of Life, and then show men how to walk therein. They heard, with quickening interest, His exposition of the nature and development of His Kingdom in the world. They heard Him analyze the life of man when it was responsive to His gracious words. They heard His searching words of Divine insight which probed into the secret heart, and brought to light those lurking evils that caused men to oppose Him and the progress of His Kingdom. All this, and more, they heard; for the public instruction of this period was divinely intended for their hearing.

3. *Methods of Work.* Furthermore, the Apostles were expected in this period to observe and learn the Methods of Jesus, which were, of course, the most effective methods possible in promoting the interests of His Kingdom. They witnessed both the act and the spirit with which He ministered to those in need.

⁹Pages 312-315 below.

¹⁰1. *John* 1:1-3. See also *Acts* 4:20; and compare *Luke* 1:14; *John* 1:14; *Hebrews* 2:3-4; 2. *Peter* 1:12-21, especially verses 16-18; and many other like Scriptures.

They saw His methods of giving instruction: how He, by careful analysis and the use of parables, made the truth clear to the mind, and then pressed it strong upon the heart. They saw how He met opposition by means of straight-forward truth, which men could not resist. They learned from Him that the Kingdom of Life was a thing in the hearts of men; that the advancement of that Kingdom resulted from individual responses to God's Word and Spirit in touch with the spirits of men; and that consecrated personality was the principal channel through which the Word, and Spirit, and saving Grace of God touched the heart of an unsaved world.

II. Demonstrations of Christ's Divine Power

Besides these things learned by incidental touch with Christ, the Apostles received, during this period, much direct instruction. The first formal lessons at this time were a sort of laboratory course, as it were, given in a series of Christ's own services through which He demonstrated His own Divine Power. Careful analysis of the facts shows that these deeds of service, though done in public for the most part, and done as service, were nevertheless done with some measure of direct reference to their effect upon the Apostles. The power of Christ, incidentally at least, had already been revealed. But the series of events here considered gives a formal demonstration of the range and scope of that power. These events, taken in order, show that Christ had absolute power over Nature, the spirit-world, disease and sickness, life and death, and the spirits of men to bless them, which last result is conditioned upon an attitude of faith in Christ.

These lessons in the power of Christ came logically at this time. He had taught the nature and value of His Kingdom, and had challenged men to find their hope and widest opportunity for life within that Kingdom. Could they do so? What assurance had they for pulling away from their moorings in the old order, and casting their spiritual anchor in this new order under Christ? To such questions, if they still lingered in the minds of any, this series of miracles was a complete answer. Christ here showed that His Sovereign power was universal, thus giving strong ground for an assured faith in Him and a confident entrance into His Kingdom. Such seems to be the central meaning of the consecutive miracles now to be considered.

1. *Christ's Power over the Laws of External Nature.* Beginning with the more tangible things, the Son of God showed His power first over the laws of external nature.

**Shown in His
Stilling the
Tempest**

Matthew 8:18-27

Mark 4:35-41

Luke 8:22-25

This was manifested to His Disciples (the Apostles, probably) when Jesus, by His own word of divine authority, stilled the tempest on the Sea of Galilee, a fact that was fully recognized by those who witnessed the event.

After the great day of Parables on the sea-coast of Galilee, Jesus sent away the multitude, and then departed, in a boat, such

**1. Occasion of
the Miracle**
Matthew 8:23-25
Mark 4:35-38
Luke 8:22-24a

as some think He kept waiting at His service, to go across the Sea. Being weary, He fell asleep in the stern of the boat. On the way, there was a great storm, such as this inland sea was subject to, coming down at night with wild fury upon the waters. The

disciples in the boat were in distress. In their fear they cried to the Lord of power to save them from destruction, for the boat was filling. Matthew quotes one disciple as arousing Jesus from sleep with an excited statement of fact: "Master! Master! we perish!" Mark records the complaining question of a second: "Master, carest Thou not that we perish?" Luke registers a prayer of distress from a third: "Save, Lord; we perish!" Curiosity would give much to know who of the Twelve spoke those several words; but that is now an unknowable detail of this incident.

Christ responded to these confused cries of distress by two rebukes. First, according to the order of events given by Matthew, Jesus rebuked the disciples. He

**2. Christ's Method
of Stilling the
Storm**
Matthew 8:26
Mark 4:39-40
Luke 8:24b-25a

reproached them, according to Matthew and Mark, because of their fear. "Why are ye fearful?" He asked, in tones full of reproof. For the moment at least, they had lost sight of one supreme fact, which was their guarantee: that is, that the forces of Nature

could do no violence against the Lord of Nature. Therefore Christ challenged their lack of faith. Luke quotes Him as asking, perhaps sharply, "Where is your faith?" In Mark's notes, however, Christ asked, "Have ye not yet faith?" thus turning their minds more directly back toward Himself.

Probably, as this question suggests, He may have spent a moment at this point reviving in their minds previous evidences of

His power; though the pressing circumstances preclude, of course, the thought of a long discussion even of that important topic. This evident disappointment in the Apostles seems deeply to have affected Jesus. Perhaps it was this fearful attitude of the Apostles that suggested the need of those further demonstrations of Christ's divine power, which begin as a series with this miracle. At least, the severity of His words, "O ye of little faith!" as given by Matthew, shows that He had expected a more confident response from the Apostles.

But there was something in the heart of Jesus deeper than this feeling of disappointment; for He saw in His disciples something more enduring than their momentary eclipse of faith. Deep in their hearts they were disposed to believe; and His attitude was one of consistent divine patience with their temporary weakness. The reader will readily contrast this whole situation with that of the scribes and Pharisees, in the last preceding chapter, whose hearts were closed against Christ. If there was an openness of mind and heart to receive the truth, Christ was ever patient in supplying the facts, evidence enough to establish conviction. Hence the readiness with which He responded in this miracle. With Divine authority He "rebuked the wind and the raging of the water," saying, as reported by Mark, "Peace, be still!" Immediately "the wind ceased, and there was a great calm."

This result, as all the writers agree, came at once by the power of Christ. He commanded, and it was done. The disciples were greatly astonished. "They feared exceedingly" at what had happened before their eyes. Their expressions of wonder show how successful the demonstration was in turning their minds, with renewed strength of conviction, again to the Divine Personality of the Son of God. "What manner of Man is this," they exclaimed with pointed assurance, "that He commandeth even the winds and the water, and they obey Him?"

The Disciples saw clearly that Jesus must be more than human, since He had such power over the forces of Nature, and over the laws by which Nature does the appointed work of God. That is, Christ here showed that He had a divine sovereignty over the natural laws of the world, and that there must therefore be a consistent co-ordination between the laws of Nature and His spiritual Kingdom in the hearts of men. Confidence in Christ from the angle of temporal well-being

**3. Effects of
Christ's Power
over Nature**
Matthew 8:27
Mark 4:41
Luke 8:25b

should therefore be complete. That is the first great lesson concerning His power.¹¹

2. *Christ's Power over the Spirit-World.* Christ next showed His sovereign power over the unseen world of the spirit. This

**Shown in His
Healing the Gada-
rene Demoniac**
Matthew 8:28-34
Mark 5:1-20
Luke 8:26-39

He exhibited in a very dramatic manner in His triumphant clash with the legion of evil spirits in the Gadarene Demoniac. This was an instance where Christ measured His power directly against that of the evil spirit world.

This demon-possessed man lived in Gadara, a small town in the broken hill country south and east of Galilee. The descrip-

**1. Power of the
Evil Spirit over
the Man**
Matthew 8:28
Mark 5:1-6
Luke 8:26-28a

tion of the case especially emphasizes the power of the evil spirit which had possessed this man. This spirit drove him from civil life to the hills, where he lived naked in the tombs. Under this influence the man was exceeding fierce, a terror to men, and strong beyond the power of control. There in the

hills he spent his time in hideous moaning and mutilation of himself night and day, except that, in his moments of wildest distraction, he was driven forth, with maniac fury, out into the deserts. Such was the man, and such the evil spirit, which, upon seeing Jesus, ran to Him and, falling down before Him, cried out, "worshipping Him," with a loud voice.

But Christ's power was superior to that of the evil spirit. This truth Christ showed by a deliberate method which involved three

**2. Power of Christ
over the Evil
Spirits**
Matthew 8:29-32
Mark 5:7-13
Luke 8:28b-33

stages of progress. First, He asserted His sovereign authority in commanding the evil spirit to come out of the man. To this command the spirits responded, recognizing Jesus as the Son of God, and also the necessary opposition between Him and them, and praying at the same time to be spared torment from His superior power. Next, Christ

used His authority in demanding the name of the spirits; to which demand they readily replied, "Legion; for we are many." Finally, Christ's full authority was acknowledged, when the evil spirits, upon special petition that they be not destroyed, were granted the privilege of entering into the swine.

¹¹Compare *Roman* 8:28; and the discussion of this point in Chapter IX, pages 204-209.

Stirring results followed this demonstration of Christ's power. The herd of two thousand swine scampered down the hill into the sea, and were drowned. The man himself sat upright and calm, being clothed and completely healed in body, mind, and soul. The whole community, both city and surrounding country, was filled with great excitement and fear. They hurried out to Jesus in great numbers, awed by the act of healing, and excited and resentful because of the swine. With murmuring accord, they requested that Jesus depart out of their midst, and He did so.

But there was one notable exception to that general attitude of resentment. It was the man who had been healed. He came, perhaps as Jesus was taking His departure, and desired to follow his great Benefactor. But Jesus sent the man home to publish there the great things the Lord had done for him. So ended this exciting incident, in witnessing which the Apostles had learned with new emphasis another truth about the Divine power of Jesus Christ.

3. *Christ's Power over Sickness and Disease.* Coming again close to common life, Jesus demonstrated next His power over sickness and disease. This was done in the midst of a great multitude in Capernaum, who had met Jesus there upon His return with the Apostles from Gadara. This case of public healing was that of a woman who had been sick for twelve years.

This woman was in a state of extreme affliction. The seriousness of her condition all the writers emphasize. They tell of her long, expensive, and fruitless treatment by physicians, and how she had only grown worse, and was at this time considered incurable. They tell, too, how she came into contact with Jesus in the midst of the crowd; and all the writers agree in presenting the entire incident as an episode occurring while Jesus was on His way to raise the daughter of Jāirus.

The records agree also in emphasizing the method of this miracle. The conditions for the healing were ripe as respects the needs and the faith of the woman. She called forth the healing power of Christ by her faith, and by her physical

3. Results of
This Miracle of
Power
Matthew 8:33-34
Mark 5:14-20
Luke 8:34-39

Shown in His
Healing the Woman
Sick for Twelve
Years
Matthew 9:1, 18-22
Mark 5:21-34
Luke 8:40-48

1. Extreme Afflic-
tion of the Woman
Matthew 9:1, 18-20
Mark 5:21-26
Luke 8:40-43

touch upon His garment. Immediately, as a result of this expression of her faith, her malady was removed, and her health was consciously renewed. With those

2. Method of Healing the Woman that Jesus desired to utilize the influence of this miracle upon the minds of those around Him, and particularly, as it seems, upon the Apostles.

Matthew 9:20-21

Mark 5:27-29

Luke 8:44

The records agree finally in emphasizing the publicity that was given to this exercise of Divine power. Calling the whole situa-

3. Christ's Healing

Power Made

Public

Matthew 9:22

Mark 5:30-34

Luke 8:45-48

tion to halt, in order that He might the better concentrate attention upon the event, Jesus affirmed His own consciousness of healing power gone forth from Himself. This He did by asking, "Who touched My garments?" This question secured the desired attention, although it caused surprise

to the Apostles, and a great deal of fear to the woman. Then with a moment of firmness, yet with all the kindness the circumstances would allow, Jesus drew forth from the woman a public acknowledgement that she had been healed by the power of Christ. When this fact was fully and publicly confirmed by the woman, Jesus Himself confirmed the miracle, and dismissed the woman with this divine assurance: "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague." In this way Jesus emphasized His sovereign power over sickness and disease.

4. Christ's Power over Physical Life. Next beyond such affliction as that of this woman is death itself; and next beyond

Shown in His

Raising Jāirus's

Daughter

Matthew 9:1, 18-19

and 23-26

Mark 5:21-24, 35-43

Luke 8:40-42, 49-56

the power to heal such affliction is the power to reclaim a person from death itself. That Jesus possessed this further power, He at once demonstrated in His raising from the dead the daughter of Jāirus. This situation was the same as that already described in the preceding miracle; for Jesus was then on His way to the home of Jāirus, where this

miracle was performed.

The central facts in the setting of this miracle are the man Jāirus, and his effective appeal to Jesus. This ruler of the synagogue came to Christ in the spirit of greatest humility, and, falling down at His feet in the spirit of worship, earnestly besought His help in this time of distress. In presenting his case to Jesus,

Jairus gave the simple facts about his little daughter, who was an only child, twelve years old, then lying at the point of death.

1. Effective Appeal of Jairus

Matthew 9:1, 18-19

Mark 5:21-24

Luke 8:40-42

He urged that Jesus come and lay His hand on the child, and heal her, so that she might live. Jesus acceded to this request, and started, with His Apostles, to the home of Jairus. The multitude followed; and amid the pressure of the crowd He healed the afflicted woman, as already described.

But the child, in the meantime, had died. The ministry of Christ became therefore a miracle of raising her to life again.

2. Three Stages of Miracle, Exalting Christ's Power

Matthew 9:23-25

Mark 5:35-42a

Luke 8:49-55

The procedure of events shows three stages, all focusing upon the supreme power of Jesus. First, the report was made that the child was dead; and the suggestion was made that Jesus be not troubled further about the matter. This was crushing news to Jairus.

But Jesus here took the situation into His own hands. Comforting the stricken father, the Lord said, "Fear not: only believe, and she shall be made whole." The purpose of these words was to re-assure the father, while Jesus handled the case adequately before the people.

In the next stage the child was proved to be really dead. As witnesses of what was to happen, Christ chose Peter, James and John, and took them with Him to the house. Approaching the people gathered there, Christ carefully drew from them a definite expression of their certainty as to her death. This He secured by His suggestion that the girl was not dead but only sleeping. This was a figurative use of terms; but the people took His words in their literal sense. "And they laughed Him to scorn, knowing that she was dead." Having thus secured this definite testimony of the people, which was what He sought, Christ was ready to proceed to the next stage of the miracle.

That was the exercise of Divine power in raising the girl to life again. The delicate intuition of Jesus appears in the fact that He would not allow either the grief or the rebounding joy of the parents to be witnessed by the common crowd. Hence He put them all forth. Such scenes and experiences are too sacred for public exhibition. Jesus would not even admit all of the Twelve Apostles. That was too many. He chose only three of them, just enough for a strong testimony; and they, with the parents of the child, saw her brought to life again. Christ spoke the word of Divine command. Her spirit returned, and she arose

and walked. And then, at His suggestion, she proved her life and health by immediately eating the food which was given her.

This miracle caused wild excitement. When Christ presented to her parents this girl thus restored to life, great amazement took hold upon them. Christ anticipated the sensation that this miracle would cause. He did not wish to be greatly interrupted in the immediate work of advancing His Kingdom and of instructing His Apostles. Hence He charged the parents of this girl that they should not publish what had happened. But

**3. Excitement
from This Raising
of the Dead**
Matthew 9:26
Mark 5:42b-43
Luke 8:56

the secret could not be kept. The curious multitude were near at hand: and the fame of this miracle went forth at once into all the land, emphasizing everywhere Christ's sovereign power over physical life and death, and leaving only the question of His power over the spirits of men to be answered in the miracles that follow.

5. Christ's Power over the Spirits of Men to Bless Them. Here, for the first time, the power of Christ has limitations. It is not merely His power over men: that is absolute. It is the question of His power over men's spirits *to bless them*: that has always been conditioned upon some contact of faith that will open the way for bestowing and receiving divine blessings.

As long as the conditions of action inhered in Christ Himself, as was the case in the previous miracles of this series, His actions were without hesitation. On the human side, faith in some form, expressed or potential, personal or relative, has been present, and the work of Christ has gone forward without particular emphasis upon this condition. Christ was free to act, and He did so.

But in this last group of three instances of Christ's power, the human element becomes a determining factor. Here faith is brought to the front as the condition that makes possible the bestowing of blessings by the Son of God. In the first two of these instances faith was present, and Christ gave the blessing. In the last faith was lacking, and Christ was, in that case, unable to do mighty works in blessing the people.

The first of the two cases of faith, where Christ could bless because men believed, and as they believed, was the incident of healing the two blind men. The record shows that they made two separate approaches to the Lord. As He was passing by them on the way, they cried out to Him, saying, "Have mercy on us, Thou Son of David." Later, "when He

**1. Two Blind
Men Blessed**
Matthew 9:27-31

was come into the house, the blind men came to Him," doubtless again urging their appeal for help.

The Son of God, in answer to their appeal, drew out their faith as a condition of the blessing which they sought. This He did by asking them a direct question: "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" Their affirmative answer revealed the fact of faith; but Jesus went farther in emphasizing the truth now in hand. He made the measure of their faith determine the extent of their blessing. Touching their eyes, He said, "According to your faith be it done unto you." The test proved that their faith was sincere and strong, and they were healed. Then Jesus charged these men to say nothing about this miracle, lest the fame of it should hinder His immediate work with the Apostles. But these once blind men, now filled with joy, went abroad, as others had done before, and published the fame of Jesus throughout the land.

**Christ's Power
Expressly Condi-
tioned upon Faith
Matthew 9:28-31**

The other case of faith, where Christ could bless, was that of the dumb demoniac whom Christ healed. This case differs from the previous one in this particular. Here the faith that is effective as a condition of the healing power of Christ was in the hearts of those who brought this speechless man to the Son of God. Christ accepted their faith, and healed the afflicted man, thus emphasizing a general principle of divine procedure in the two types of faith in the two instances here brought into close contrast.

**2. A Dumb
Demoniac Healed
Matthew 9:32-34**

The immediate effects of this miracle are full of interest. At this time Jesus and His Apostles were on the road. Following them were the usual crowd,—the multitude, and the Pharisees, the latter carefully watching Jesus and the effects of His work upon the people. The miracle was done, apparently, in sight of all. The healing was complete. The dumb man spoke, being freed from the demon. The multitude stood aghast, and said, "It was never so seen in Israel!"

**Notable Effects
of This Miracle
Matthew 9:33-34**

But the Pharisees, seeing the fact of the miracle, and hearing the applause of the people, were filled with envy and malice. Their resentment, however, they could express only in terms of their old charge, that Jesus was in league with Satan. "By the prince of devils," they said again, "casteth He out devils." But Jesus, as seen in the previous chapter, had already fully answered

that charge; and here, so far as the record states, He treated it with complete and significant silence.

The last incident of this group was that which revealed the lack of faith among the acquaintances of Jesus in the City of Nazareth. There for lack of faith in them, His power to bless was greatly limited. With the Apostles, He had gone to that city, and preached in the synagogue on the Sabbath Day. Those who heard Him, having known

**3. Lack of Faith
at Nazareth
Matthew 13:54-58
Mark 6:1-6**

something of His early life in that community, were astonished at His message. In wonder they inquired, severally among themselves, as to the source of His doctrine and His wisdom, and for an explanation of His power. They sought, like common biographers and biologists, for an explanation of these marvels in His visible ancestry and His family connections. But they saw no divine origin and explanation of these things. Supposing that they knew Jesus too well on His human side, they recognized Him not at all in His true nature as the Son of God; and so they were offended in Him.

The effect of their unbelief, as expressly stated, was to limit the exercise of Christ's power in their city. In the accounts of these results, there are three points of interest. First, when Jesus saw their want of faith, He pointed, by the use of a proverb, to His acceptance elsewhere, and thus laid the greater responsibility upon those who should have known Him best. Again, the sacred

**Limitations of
Divine Power
in Nazareth
Matthew 13:57-58
Mark 6:4-6**

historians agree in saying that this lack of faith limited the power of Christ, rendering it impossible for Him greatly to bless the people of that community.

However, the writers carefully guard against questioning the power of Christ in itself considered. His power in the absolute they defend by stating that He did there heal a few sick folk. But this very note of discrimination shows the limiting power of unbelief to hinder and prevent spiritual blessings.

Finally, the Lord Jesus marveled at this unbelief. Why so? Did He wonder that they *did not*, or *could not*, or *would not*, believe? Was He disappointed in His generous confidence in human nature? Was He amazed at the small prejudices which sometimes blind men's spiritual eyes, and keep them out of the Kingdom of God? The speculation is interesting. It is also very practical! It is a fearful responsibility to hinder the work of divine grace. What marvel that Jesus marveled!

III. Practical Lessons and Experience in Mission Work

The Kingdom of Christ, as already suggested, was advanced in this period by the direct preaching of the Gospel. This preaching was done by Jesus Himself, and by the Apostles, whom He sent out to engage in that work.

In His own preaching tour at this time Jesus went throughout the cities and villages of Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and sickness. On these itineraries the Apostles, who were always with Jesus at this time, had an excellent opportunity to observe the working principles of the Master Workman of the Kingdom. But even excellent observation was not enough. The Apostles needed definite instruction in methods, and practical training in actual work. For these reasons, and also because of pressing needs out in the mission field, the Apostles were sent forth upon their first mission as ministers of the Kingdom.

*1. The Call of the Twelve to Their Mission Work.*¹² While Jesus was going about His own work of preaching, He saw the eager waiting multitudes, and had compassion on them, because they were distressed and scattered, having no leaders. Reflecting upon this situation, Christ used those memorable words which have ever since stirred the hearts of men: "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few." From these facts Christ deduced at once the duty of prayer, which He laid directly upon the hearts of the Apostles: "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He send forth laborers into the harvest."

Immediately after this call to prayer for workers, the Apostles themselves were called to enter upon the work for which they had been praying. Calling the Twelve to Himself, apart from the crowd, and possibly away from their own places of prayer, Jesus planned at once to send them forth, by two and two, into this work. As credentials of their mission, and as an equipment also for work, the Twelve were given authority and power to cast out unclean spirits, and to heal all manner of dis-

¹²The full references on the Mission of the Apostles at this time are: *Matthew* 9:36-38; 10:1-42; 14:12-13; *Mark* 6:7-13, 30-33; *Luke* 9:1-6; 9:10-11a; *John* 6:1-3. For the names of the Twelve, given here by Matthew, see Chapter VI, page 126.

ease and sickness. Their central work, however, was to preach and to teach the Gospel of the Kingdom of Christ. The work was vital, because the people were in need. The work was also under the direct personal guidance of Christ Himself. The Apostles had, therefore, in this practical work, the best possible conditions for training in the great missionary and evangelistic enterprises of Christ's Kingdom in the world.

2. *The Instruction of the Apostles for Their Work.* Christ's guidance of this work began with detailed instruction. Before

**Statement of
Permanent Principles**

Matthew 10:5-42

Mark 6:8-11

Luke 9:2-5

sending forth the Twelve, Christ taught them what to do, and what to expect, in the work of His Kingdom. In this outline of the work He laid down those principles of missionary and evangelistic work which are of permanent application in the forward movement of His Kingdom, thus providing,

in this first statement of principles, for practically all contingencies that should arise in the world-wide program of the Church of Christ.

In a natural and effective manner, Christ began His instructions with immediate and tangible considerations, outlining first the practical external plans for the mission

**1. Practical Plans
for the Mission**

of the Twelve. His first point was to define carefully their territorial assignment. Forbidding them to go to the Gentiles, or to the

Samaritans, He limited their activities to the House of Israel. This limitation was probably a prudential measure. The Apostles

**(1) Territorial
Assignment**

Matthew 10:5-6

were still under training, and the best results would come to them where conditions afforded a goodly measure of success. Moreover, they would be less likely to go astray,

or to arouse embarrassing antagonism, if they worked, for a while at least, among their own fellow-countrymen.

Next, Christ defined the nature of their work, describing it as being of three different kinds, which after all are inseparable.

**(2) Nature of the
Work**

Matthew 10:7-8

Luke 9:2

The Apostles were to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, urging the people to recognize and accept the Kingdom of Heaven, which was then at hand. They were also to minister to the needs of the

people, healing their sick, raising their dead, cleansing the lepers, and casting out the evil spirits. Furthermore, in a generous way always, the Apostles were to represent the bounteous grace of

God. "Freely ye received, freely give," were the words in which Christ summarized this general responsibility of their mission.

From the work of the Apostles, Christ turned to the problem of providing for their journey while doing that work. The solu-

(3) **Provisions
for Their Journey**
Matthew 10:9-15
Mark 6:8-11
Luke 9:2-5; and
Cf. 10:3-12

tion of that problem He found in the careful application of a few simple but basic principles of conduct on the part of the Apostles. For their journey they were to make no preparation in material things. Christ considered that the work should, and would, support the workers. Such was His confidence

in the universal sense of justice and active gratitude in those to whom, directly and indirectly, the Kingdom of Christ should bring its blessings. That was an exalting tribute to human nature, a compliment which men under Christian civilization have lived up to in a very sorry measure.

Possibly Christ, in outlining these principles, was thinking also that the work of the Kingdom which did not stir up those ennobling springs of response that would provide amply for the needs of the Kingdom was of small value. The thought is suggestive. One regrets to admit the truth, that the visible Kingdom has at times been uncertain, ineffective, and even compromising in its attitude and spirit of work. May it be true, that the Kingdom of Christ *has received* the material support that it has earned! Do the meager budgets, the church deficits, and the starving ministry of to-day, measure the enlightened conscience, and the depth of gratitude, which the Kingdom has awakened in the hearts of men! There is something here for sober thinking.

It is almost certain that Christ had in mind also the good business plan of avoiding all impedimenta in the work of the Apostles. They had to go on foot from place to place, and needed therefore to be unhindered by anything beyond the immediate necessities of the day and hour. The same principle of simplicity was to characterize their sojourn in a city where they were working. The Apostles were to seek out those who were worthy of the honor thus conferred upon them, and to abide there, bringing always courtesy and benediction into the home.

But if the hospitality of a home were refused, then the Apostles should leave that home summarily; and they should leave it with such testimony as should show that the home had thus incurred divine displeasure, in that the home had rejected those representatives with whom God, through His Kingdom, is identified in the work of mercy and grace. This truth, that the channels of Divine

mercy flow through the Kingdom of Christ, is also a subject for sober reflection. The Christ-less Christianity that some profess is a dangerous thing. "Unprofitable," and "ungrateful," were fearful words when they fell from the lips of Jesus Christ.

Next after these somewhat external plans, Jesus took up the question of persecutions, and the many problems involved in the

**2. Persecutions, and
How to Meet Them**
Matthew 10:16-33

fact of an opposing spirit in the world, naturally set against the work of His Kingdom. Christ tried to hide nothing; but instead, He told His Apostles, with straightforward frankness, that they, the missionaries of His Kingdom, were going forth as sheep among wolves. Theirs was to be a life of opposition and hardship, a life crowned by sacrifice and suffering. But in and through it all they were to assume always the attitude of wisdom and inoffensiveness. Their basic principle was to be expressed in the attitude of non-resistance.

Patiently the representatives of the Kingdom were to meet the opposing world. The proper manner of doing that, Christ here

**(1) Manner of
Meeting an Oppos-
ing World**
Matthew 10:17-20
Cf. also 24:4-14
Mark 13:5-13
Luke 12:11-12
Luke 21:8-19

analyzed for the Apostles. First, they were prudently to avoid the provoking of any unnecessary clash with the men of the world. "Beware of men," said Christ; meaning thereby that the Apostles should carefully avoid antagonism from those who would be ready always to bring Christians into persecution. The truth, of course, had to be preached; and that would naturally antagonize where it touched the spirit of the world. But His point is that nothing could be gained by merely provoking men whose only re-action would be to deliver Christ's messengers to councils, to scourge them in the synagogues, and to prosecute them before governors and kings. Such provoking of wrath could only increase judgment against those who thus persecuted the workers of the Kingdom. The path of duty for the messengers of Christ was the path of prudent, patient, and effective service. This meant that they should work, as far as possible, always on the constructive side of individuals and of society.

**(2) Scope of Perse-
cutions; and
Working Principles**
Matthew 10:21-23
Cf. John 15:17; 16:14

But persecutions, as Christ went on to emphasize, were inevitable. They were certain to come; and their scope would range from intimate personal oppositions to those of universal extent. "And brother shall deliver up brother to death, and the father his child: and children

shall rise up against parents, and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for My Name's sake."

The safe principle, however, and withal the winning principle, was to endure in all without resistance. Christ urged the Apostles, when opposition arose to prevent their work, prudently to seek work elsewhere. In support of this working principle, He assured them that there would still be plenty of work to do, even until the very Coming of the Son of Man. Of course, in urging prudence, Christ made no suggestion of compromise on the part of His messengers; nor did He mean that they should try to escape from hard places of service. But He did insist upon prudence as a condition, the more so as a rule in the hard places, of getting constructive work done.

Christ insisted further that there should be no surprise at opposition even in its violent forms. Violence was the natural result of the situation. Those who led the opposition were entirely void of spiritual insight. So far were they from such insight, that they had actually called the Son of God Beelzebub! What then could be expected of their power to recognize and respond to the word of truth? But as an effective off-set to this inevitable hardness of the opposing world, Christ pointed out to the Apostles three sources of encouragement and assurance to those who faithfully represent His Kingdom in the world.

The first comfort under affliction arises from an assured victory through the triumph of Christ and the triumphing purposes of God. Discipleship means fellowship in the sufferings of Christ, Who has already triumphed over the extreme limits of persecution. Even in this the servant cannot go beyond his Master; and Christ has already attained the victory. Again, discipleship means fearless participation in the triumphant purposes of God, Whose truth must be revealed, and Whose will must be made known. These things *must be*. The messenger of Christ's Kingdom, being united with God in these purposes of His, needs only to be faithful and fearless in re-echoing the truths taught by Jesus Christ. One is thus linked with divine purposes which cannot fail.

Further comfort arises from the fact that the disciples of Christ have but one object of fear. They do not fear the persecutor who can only kill the body. They fear only the destroyer of

(3) Sources of Encouragement under Persecution
Matthew 10:24-33

a. Triumph of Christ, and of God's Purposes
Matthew 10:24-25; 26-27
Cf. Luke 12:1-3, and John 13:16-17

souls. The disciples of Christ, having committed their souls to God's care, rest in perfect confidence. They behold the Father's care of the falling sparrow, and know that His Children are of more value to Him than many sparrows. They know that no interest of life is too small for the careful attention of Divine Love. They therefore take courage, in the hours of darkening persecution, from the keeping power of God.

There is yet a deeper comfort in the hour of persecution. That strongest comfort is linked with life's final tests. It rises out of an assurance of approval and final acceptance by Jesus Christ, Who shall judge the quick and the dead. Discipleship decides eternal weal or woe. Fidelity secures the recognition of Christ in Heaven. If men confess Christ before men, then He will confess them before the Father in Heaven. But if they deny Him, then He will also deny them before the Father. This is the strongest comfort and stay of life. Consciousness of God's approval makes men mighty as representatives of God and truth and right. Courage is dauntless when men look upon spiritual victory, already assured as an accomplished fact. Assurance of final acceptance makes men more than conquerors through Jesus Christ.

Before sending the Apostles forth to represent His Kingdom in the world, Christ desired that they should have a definite understanding of three truths that lie at the foundation of the Kingdom and its work in the world. He therefore studied these truths with the Apostles in the closing words of these instructions for their mission.

First, Christ emphasized that His Kingdom must always work in its essential nature. It is a Kingdom of truth, and of authority and practice in righteousness. For this reason, His Kingdom naturally and necessarily provokes conflict in a world where evil and error are powerful. Indeed, as He said, Christ came to send a sword in the earth. The work of His Kingdom inevitably brings to the front all the oppositions conceivable between truth and error, authority and uncertainty, right and wrong, good and evil, Christ and Satan.

b. Freedom from Fear: Safe in God's Care
Matthew 10:28-31
Cf. Luke 12:4-7

c. Final Acceptance by Christ the Judge
Matthew 10:32-33
Cf. Mark 8:35-38
Luke 12:8-10
Luke 9:23-27

3. Three Basic Truths about the Kingdom
Matthew 10:34-42

(1) Kingdom Working Always in its Essential Nature
Matthew 10:34-36
Cf. Luke 12:49-53

This being true, the work of the Kingdom must sometimes compel separations between those who would naturally be bound in the closest ties of life. "A man's foes shall be they of his own household." The dividing lines of faith separated between members of the same family. The acceptance of Christ led then, as it also leads now on some foreign mission fields, to family oppositions, social ostracism, and even more tragic consequences. The same general principle is still operative. In Christian lands, persecutions have disappeared; but those intimately dividing lines of faith too often remain, separating eternally between those who are nearest to each other in this present life. The difference now is that glaring oppositions are gone, and men give less concern to these spiritual separations wrought by the Kingdom in its work from day to day.

Furthermore, Christ would have the Apostles to know that the Kingdom of Christ imposes certain supreme obligations upon the life of the individual. The Kingdom requires of every citizen a supreme love to Christ the King, even greater than the love of father or mother, or of brother or sister. Such first devotion of life alone makes one worthy of discipleship. Under this condition alone may one enter into right relations with Jesus Christ. That is the beginning of citizenship. The Kingdom further requires fidelity to Christ under all circumstances.

The crosses of life that are borne make men worthy of their Lord and Savior. The Kingdom also requires complete devotion of life in unselfish service. To make a success of spiritual life, a man must live for something other and higher than himself alone. He must *devote* his life if he would save it. Life is a means for service, and not an end in itself. A program of self-forgetting devotions to duty is the condition of attaining that for which Christ has planted His Kingdom in the hearts of men.

(3) Kingdom Identified with Its Representatives
 Matthew 10:40-42
 Cf. Matt. 25:40, 45
 Mark 9:40-42
 Luke 10:16
 John 13:20

Finally, Christ assured the Apostles that His Kingdom, in its work on earth, is identified with its representatives. This is true in respect to the Divine Head of the Kingdom. Christ said, "He that receiveth you receiveth Me, and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me." This is true also respecting the standards of truth set forth by the Kingdom. He who receives the teachers and leaders of

the Kingdom, which means to respect and to follow them, shall secure to himself the rewards which they represent in righteousness. This is true in regard to the service and support of the Kingdom. He who contributes, as a disciple, even so much as a cup of cold water to a representative of the Kingdom (one of these little ones), he shall in no wise lose his reward.

3. *The Practical Work of the Apostles.* Having received these re-assuring instructions, the Twelve Apostles went forth to do the work which Christ had appointed to them on these first missionary journeys.

They went forth two and two; and every reader doubtless would like to follow them through the details of their work. But that is now impossible. The sacred record gives only a general statement of their work. There is a note of their itinerary. They departed, after these instructions by Jesus, and went throughout the villages of Galilee.

There is a note of their message. They preached the Gospel, and urged men to repent of their sins. There is a note of their work of mercy. They cast out devils, and, anointing the sick, healed them. And that is all the record of their work, except the matters given in their later report, which belongs under the next general division of this chapter.

IV. Testing the Work and the Knowledge of the Apostles

During this period Christ occasionally examined the Apostles, checking up their work, and testing their understanding of the instructions which He had given. These examinations were not "finals," as the college student would say. They were incidental rather than formal. They were freely varied in character, so as to be effective for the purposes which the Great Teacher had in mind. Most of these tests came near the end of this period; and some of them served as the basis for the final touches of instruction which Jesus wished to give to the Twelve at this time.

1. *The Report of the Twelve on Their Mission.* Important among these checks against the activities and attainments of the Apostles, was the Report which they made of their work on the mission to which Christ had called them, as already outlined in this chapter.

This report was made near the close of Christ's third preaching tour in Galilee, which He had resumed while the Apostles

were busy with their own mission. The report was given, according to Matthew, after the death of John the Baptist, which fact had deeply touched the heart of Jesus and His disciples.' The place of the report was probably near the city of Capernaum. That was the natural meeting place after the preaching tours were completed. Probably by previous appointment, the Apostles returned to give their Lord a formal account of the work which they had accomplished under His authority.

1. Time and Place of the Report

Matthew 14:12-13

Mark 6:30-33

Luke 9:10-11a

John 6:1-3

Their report, given no doubt in great detail, was not a single story. There were really six couples to give separate accounts

2. Substance of Their Reports

on this occasion. But the record of their reports, mentioned only by Mark and Luke, is very brief. Mark, whose statement is the longer of the two, covers the whole matter in these words: "And the Apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus; and they told Him all things, whatsoever they had done, and whatsoever they had taught." Luke says merely that they "declared unto Him what things they had done." It is probable, however, that they were able to report general faithfulness and success in the work to which they had gone under the Lord's directions.

Though the record is very modest, these accounts were doubtless given with that sincere enthusiasm which arises naturally from the consciousness of work well done.

3. Appreciation by Jesus of the Work Reported

The fine response of appreciation on the part of Jesus shows that there was also a divine satisfaction in their achievements. Few personal touches even in the life of Jesus are finer than His response to these reports. Certainly more is rarely said in so few words. After hearing all their experiences on these journeys, Jesus said to the Twelve: "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while." What a holiday was here promised! Well-earned! Divinely appointed! Unique perhaps in human experience! A day off in the Kingdom, to be spent with the King Himself! So they retired from this scene, for such a day of rest as the Lord Himself should plan. One almost regrets that the pressing needs of the multitudes who followed Jesus into the desert place prevented this period of rest from being fully realized.¹³

¹³For the pressure of the multitude that interrupted these plans for rest, see Chapter XI, pages 251-254.

2. *A Test of Faith.* The test outlined above was a test of works. Next, and closely following, came a test of faith. After reviewing the achievements of the Apostles through the power of Christ, He desired to know next what they thought of the Christ Himself. Hence He put them to the test as to their conception of and faith in His own Divine Nature.

This test came at night on the Sea of Galilee. It occurred in connection with the incident of Jesus's coming to His Apostles, walking on the water. The night was that between the Feeding of the Five Thousand and the Discourse on the Bread of Life. At the close of the previous day, the people, mistaking His true nature, had tried to make Jesus a temporal king.¹⁴ On the following day, Jesus explained Himself as a Divine Source of Spiritual Life, a Spiritual Savior sent down from Heaven.¹⁵ Between these two events there was a logical place for examining into the mind of the Apostles to see what they were really thinking as to the nature of Jesus Christ. Did they share the feeling of the multitude who, on the previous evening, desired to make Him a temporal king? Were they prepared in mind and heart for the Discourse on the Bread of Life, which awaited them on the morrow? These were questions about which the minds of the Apostles needed to be very clear and definite.

The test was the more effective because it was circumstantial. It called forth a spontaneous expression from the heart of the Apostles. On the previous evening, in order to forestall the effort of the people to make Him their king, Jesus had quietly sent them away. He had also previously sent away His own Apostles in a little boat across the sea, a fact which the people had witnessed.

Left thus alone, Jesus retired in the evening to a mountain alone for prayer and communion with His Father. Meanwhile, about the fourth watch of the night, a contrary wind had arisen on the sea. The Disciples were in distress. But Jesus was not indifferent to their needs. Seeing the difficulty of their situation, Jesus went to them, walking on the water. Upon nearing their boat, He made as if He would pass them by. This manner of presenting Himself to them was far removed from the suggestion of His character as a temporal King.

¹⁴Chapter XI, pages 253-254.

¹⁵Chapter XI, pages 254-262.

However, the thought of His temporal kingship was doubtless still lingering in the minds of the Apostles. It is even probable

3. Gradual Evolution of Their Convictions

that the attitude of mind which arose from this lingering thought had something to do with the slowness with which the Apostles recognized Jesus when He thus came before them. Only by gradual steps did they arrive at that expression of confidence which He desired to draw forth from them on this occasion. They reached conviction by way of fear, and positive proof as to the Son of God.

The appearance of Jesus was sudden and unexpected. Naturally the Apostles responded in fear. For a moment, too, Jesus

(1) Fear and Proof

Matthew 14:26-29

Mark 6:48b-50

John 6:19b-20

this, they supposed Him to be an apparition, and were greatly afraid. They were not yet in possession of the facts. Jesus therefore dealt kindly with them, giving this assurance: "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid." Then Peter, as if to test the Lord Himself, said, "Lord, if it be Thou bid me come unto Thee upon the water." Jesus, accepting this challenge, said, "Come!" Thus the Lord Jesus allowed Himself to be proved. "And Peter went down from the boat, and walked upon the waters, to come to Jesus."

But the event proved to be a test of Peter rather than of Jesus. Peter made a good beginning. But when he saw the strong wind,

(2) Final Conviction

Matthew 14:30-33

Mark 6:51-52

John 6:21

his courage failed. Beginning to sink, Peter cried to Jesus for help. But the Lord Jesus did not fail. First He rescued Peter, whose failure arose when he looked away from Jesus to the boisterous waters. Peter did not hold to the logic of the situation: that he was perfectly safe before the forces of Nature while he was obeying the command of the Lord of Nature. This was the test for which he had asked. In failing before the test, he deserved therefore the rebuke which Jesus gave for the weakness of his faith.

After calming the sea, Jesus came, with great welcome, to the amazed Disciples in the boat. Their conviction was complete. They worshipped Him, saying, "Of a truth Thou art the Son of God!"¹⁶ By this manner of testing the Apostles, it was made to appear that one great truth was well established in their minds

¹⁶This incident is followed in the records by a brief note of the practical work of healing when they had come to the Land of Gennesaret. *Matthew* 14:34-36; *Mark* 6:53-56.

and hearts. They had therefore the right point of view from which to understand Christ's great discourse the next day on the Bread of Life.

3. *An Examination of Spiritual Understanding.* The Apostles had attained the right spiritual point of view; but the very spiritual depths of that discourse on the following day imposed a double test upon the Apostles. The discourse was itself a test of their spiritual understanding; and out of it grew a direct test of their personal loyalty to Jesus. Did they understand what they had heard? Were they willing, in view of what Jesus had spoken, to abide faithfully with Him? The first of these questions, bearing upon their understanding, will now be considered.¹⁷

Jesus spoke of Himself as the Bread of Life,—as Bread sent down from Heaven. His language was highly figurative, highly symbolical. Not all of this figurative language was wholly clear to all the people. Indeed, some of it, especially the references by Jesus to the eating of His flesh, puzzled even the Disciples. They complained that this was a "hard saying." But Jesus, perceiving their perplexity, proceeded to test their capacity for spiritual wonder. They were wondering then that He had claimed Himself descended from Heaven. "Doth this cause you to stumble?" He said. Still greater wonder was possible to them. They might see Him ascend again to Heaven where He was before. Their response to this challenging question must have been favorable in the sight of Jesus. Immediately He explained that His previous words were to be spiritually understood. He further explained that this spiritual meaning was to be come at by the help of the quickening Spirit from the Father. Thus Jesus accomplished His purpose of discovering and supplementing the spiritual insight of His own Disciples.

4. *A Test of Personal Loyalty.* These "hard sayings" were, however, too much for acceptance by the common multitude, who were more concerned about tangible bread than they were about spiritual truth. Therefore, when Jesus insisted upon these higher things of the spirit-life, they went away, and followed no more after Him. This falling away of the common crowd deeply affected Jesus. Almost immediately He brought the test of loyalty to bear upon His own Apostles.

Test of Spiritual Understanding
John 6:60-65
Cf. Chap. XI,
Pp. 260-1

1. Test of the Twelve
John 6:66-71

¹⁷For previous discussions of this passage, see Chapter XI, pages 254-262; and Chapter XII, pages 281-283.

"Would ye also go away?" He said to them. Apparently, however, their minds were made up. As quick as thought came an answer from Peter, who doubtless felt that he was speaking for all his comrades in the Apostleship. His words were very positive. "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and know that Thou art the Holy One of God." From such an answer, it would seem that the question of personal loyalty was fully settled.

But the settlement was not as perfect and final as these words of Peter suggest. Among other things at this time, Jesus was testing the power of the Apostles to withstand popular social suggestions and the influence of mere crowd movements. The answer of Peter was loyal enough in itself,

**2. Special Test of
Judas Iscariot**
John 6:64-65; 70-71

and as it applied to most of the Apostles, who were as a group profoundly faithful to their Lord and Master. But Peter had not spoken for the entire group, as he had supposed.

The exception was Judas Iscariot, whose heart was already under the careful eye of the Divine insight of Jesus. With Judas immediately in mind, Jesus had previously stated that "some of you (the Apostles) . . . do not believe," implying that such did not have "the Spirit that quickeneth." Probably this suggestive statement gave rise to that emphasis of strong assertion which is so prominent in the reply of Peter already cited. Furthermore, this direct statement makes it very clear that Jesus already knew the secret attitude of uncertain loyalty in the heart of Judas.

That startling revelation of his own secret heart was still fresh in the mind of Judas while Peter was speaking. Judas was also conscious that the eyes of Jesus were looking deep into his own secret heart. These circumstances would therefore produce on the part of Judas some inevitable re-action to Peter's proclamation of loyalty. If so, however faint it may have been, Jesus probably saw it,—may, indeed, have been looking for it. Knowing the truth about Judas, Jesus would not allow the too absolute statement of Peter to go without a challenge. Jesus therefore said, in answer to Peter, but with direct reference to Judas, "Did not I choose you the Twelve, and one of you is a devil?"

Thus Jesus brought heavy pressure to bear upon Judas Iscariot. What was the Lord's motive for this pressure at this time? Certainly He desired to clear up the truth of Peter's assertion of loyalty as applied to the other Apostles. Certainly, too, it would seem, this pressure was an intentional testing of Judas

at this opportune moment. It was a good time for Judas to make a firm and final decision. On the one side were the faithful Apostles, and it would be easy to take a stand of loyalty with them. On the other side were the departing multitudes, and it would be easy also to go away with them. Probably Jesus intended this incident as a formal opportunity offered Judas to make up his mind on the question of personal loyalty. But the future traitor here, as also in the ultimate test of his life, failed. His life, as Christ stated on this occasion, was a failure from within; and without deep change of heart and character, other result than failure was to him impossible.¹⁸

5. *An Examination on Moral and Spiritual Values in Life.* Finally, Jesus asked His Disciples one searching question as a test and stimulus of their clear understanding of the nature and source of moral and spiritual values in life.

This inquiry came at the close of Christ's reply to the Jews when they charged His disciples with eating with unwashed hands.¹⁹ In that reply, Jesus showed that

1. An Inquiry into the Nature of Moral and Spiritual Life
Matthew 15:15-20
Mark 7:17-23

it was even possible for religious observances to become sinful. This He argued on the ground that the moral element has its origin and moral quality from the heart within. Continuing, He affirmed that external things in themselves have no moral character at all. All moral character arises from the re-actions of the moral and spiritual nature in its responses to the stimuli of daily life and particular circumstances. "Not that," He said, "which entereth into the mouth defileth the man; but that which proceedeth out of the mouth, this defileth the man." This somewhat philosophical inquiry was conducted by Jesus in the presence of all the multitude.

Later in the day, when He with the Apostles had entered into the house, they asked Him for a further explanation of this truth. There seems to be a touch of dis-

2. A Test Question to the Apostles

appointment on the part of Jesus in the searching question with which He began to clarify the uncertain understanding of His Apostles. "Are ye so without understanding also?" He said to them. Some may regard this as merely a teaching question. It was that. But it was more than that. It served to introduce an

¹⁸See Chapter XI, pages 261-262.

¹⁹For previous discussions of this passage, see Chapter XI, pages 262-263; and Chapter XII, pages 284-286.

informal but very effective examination of what the Apostles had learned from Christ's previous discussion of the true source of moral and spiritual values in life.

Here ends the three parallel chapters, which, from different points of view, have surveyed the recorded facts in this busy period of Christ's public ministry. When this period began the Kingdom was only being organized. During the period much was accomplished. After organizing the Kingdom, Jesus carried out an extensive program of propagating that Kingdom among the people. Throughout the period He engaged in repeated conflicts with His enemies, defeating at every turn their attempts to hinder the work and advancement of His Kingdom in the hearts of men. All the while He was giving the Twelve Apostles, incidentally and by direct instruction, an effective schooling in the truths, and methods, and practical work of His Kingdom, which they were later to represent before all the world. Having completed this inauguration of His Kingdom, Jesus was ready to undertake the new departure in His Life-work which begins with the opening of the next chapter.

PART V

THE FACING OF CHRIST
TOWARD THE CROSS

RECONCILIATION BY THE CROSS OF CHRIST

"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." *Galatians 6:14.*

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." *Isaiah 1:18.*

"Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Of which salvation the Prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the Gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven; which things the angels desired to look into. Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." *1. Peter 1:9-13.*

"All things are of God, Who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation: to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For He made Him, Who knew no sin, to be a Sin-Offering for us; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." *2. Corinthians 5:18-21.*

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit

"If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, Who is even at the right hand of God, Who also maketh intercession for us." *Romans 8:1-4, 31-34.*

CHAPTER XIV

THE DEATH OF CHRIST BROUGHT INTO VIEW

"And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for Himself." *Daniel 9:26.*

"The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His Life a ransom for many." *Matthew 20:28; Mark 10:45.*

"For it became Him, for Whom are all things, and by Whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." *Hebrews 2:10.*

"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were . . . redeemed with the precious Blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who by Him do believe in God." *1. Peter 1:18-21.*

This chapter marks a new departure in the Life-Work of the Son of God. For the first time in His course Christ turned His own full attention, and that of others, toward the Cross. Hitherto He had been busy with other things. During the first thirty years, the Lord Jesus had grown up to human maturity. Then He spent a long period of His early work getting Himself well before the people. During this time He became widely popular, and attracted to Himself a substantial following. Out of that following He chose Twelve Apostles, as the nucleus of His Kingdom, which He organized, propagated, and defended, as seen above in Parts III and IV. Meantime the Lord had also instructed the Apostles in the truths and working principles of His Kingdom.

After He had thus established Himself and His Kingdom in the world, the Son of God began to focus full attention upon His approaching Death, as the central Fact in the outworking of His Kingdom of Life and Service. Henceforth He looked toward the great Sacrifice on the Cross: for He was the Divine-Human Savior, appointed to save, through His own Death, those who might believe on Him. That approaching Death was the Lord's central theme during this last period of His Galilean Ministry.¹

However, in the Scriptures surveyed in this chapter, there are several points of outstanding interest. There is this definite

¹This Third Period of the Galilean Ministry extended from Christ's journey into the regions of Tyre and Sidon to His final departure from Galilee for Jerusalem, where He was active at the Feast of Tabernacles. See *John 7:1-8:52* below. Practically everything in this period pointed toward the Death of Christ.

turning of Jesus, as already suggested, toward the Cross as the central Fact in the effective outworking of His Kingdom. There is a new international note suggested in these records. There is an obvious effort on the part of Jesus at this time to work in seclusion, and a repeated insistence that He should be given no additional publicity. There is also an evident and growing consciousness on His part of the weight of the world's sin and hope, which was to be wrought out through His own suffering. Finally, there is a definite turn at this time in the plans of His enemies, who, having failed in other measures of opposition, determine now to kill Him, and so summarily to put an end to His claims, and Kingdom, and leadership in the world.

I. The Problem of Race Prejudice

Christ died for all the world. Looking toward the Cross, and beyond to the accomplishment of the world-wide significance of

**Race Prejudice
vs. the Kingdom
of Christ**
Matthew 15:21-28
Mark 7:24-30

His Death, Christ saw, in clear light, that race prejudice which should become a problem in the progress of His Kingdom. A deeper providence is therefore evident in the little international journey of Jesus with which this new section of His life-work is introduced, when He, for the first and only time in His public ministry, left the land of the Jews and went into the regions of Tyre and Sidon. Geographically this journey was the shortest by which He could make His ministry international; and this single world-wide touch of His work is told in terms of that incident through which the problem of race prejudice and its proper solution have been set forth before the world.

This incident was that of the Gentile woman, who was a Syro-phœnician by race, and her effective attitude toward the Lord Jesus Christ. The problem of the Kingdom was this. The Jews were despised by surrounding nations, and yet Salvation was of the Jews. Through that people God had chosen to bring His Blessing to the world. But would the world accept the Blessing in this way of God's appointment? Would the world be willing to rise above its national and race prejudices in order to attain eternal life through Jesus Christ? Would the Gentile world receive the Gift of God from and through a despised people? Thus only might the Kingdom of Christ become world-wide in its applications to the needs of men. In the solution of this problem, as set forth in this incident of the Syrophœnician Woman, there are two central points of interest.

The first of these is the faith and attitude of this Gentile woman. She desired help. Coming to Jesus, with surprising definiteness of address, she said, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil." But Jesus made no reply. His delay in recognizing her was designed to draw out

**1. Faith of the
Gentile Woman**
Matthew 15:22-27
Mark 7:25-27

her race feeling toward a help and a hope that should come of the Jews. She continued her appeal. The Apostles, mistaking the meaning of Christ's silence, desired Him to send her away. But Jesus, provoking her race feeling more definitely, said, "I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the House of Israel." He intended that this truth, for a moment at least, should serve as an expression of that race feeling of complacent religious exclusiveness in the Jews which had so constantly irritated their neighbors. But the woman, having interests and convictions that rose above race pride and prejudice, persisted in her appeal. Coming nearer, and worshipping Jesus, she said, "Lord, help me!"

That was a powerful appeal. But she had yet to undergo a greater test of her attitude. Jesus immediately revived in her mind the contempt with which the Jews looked down upon all of their neighbors. Jesus called into play the full force of that irritating racial attitude when He said, "It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs." That was the general feeling of the Jews toward her nation and her people. But she was able to stand the test, having faith to rise above such race feeling. "Yea, Lord," she said: "for even the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table." In triumphant self-forgetfulness, she was willing to pay the price of divine help, to accept hope and help in the way of God's great plan of hope for the world.

Then came the reply of Jesus. The woman, by the superior position she had assumed, was prepared to partake, not of the crumbs merely, but of the main feast of divine grace. When her faith rose clearly above race prejudice sufficient for her to accept of God's grace under His own conditions, several things happened. Jesus Himself marveled: "O woman! Great is thy faith!" She commanded the power of God: "Be it done unto thee even as thou wilt." Her daughter was healed, even as Jesus had given assurance in answer to the woman's faith.

The significance of the incident lies in this fact. The Son of

God, given to the world through a Jewish lineage, would have to be accepted by other nationalities. The case here is typical, and expressive of a universal truth. Christ tested this Gentile woman's faith by stirring in her that race prejudice which might separate between her and Him. But when her faith rose triumphant above such prejudice, He recognized no difference between her and others, and blessed her with the exact formula of grace which He had previously used toward His fellowcountrymen among the Jews who believed on Him.

The generalized truth has a double application. Just so should it be in the onward march of the Kingdom of Christ from nation to nation. Prejudices that separated races and peoples must not be allowed to hinder the progress of divine grace in the world. So it is also with individuals. When they have been willing to rise above the petty concerns that separate them from God, and to comply with His conditions of divine grace, He has ever been ready to save and to bless them. That is, in part at least, the meaning of this incident, which comes logically at the opening of this new Part of the Savior's Life-Work: for, from the moment He turned His eyes toward the Cross, Christ looked beyond the realms of Judaism to a program of world-wide redemption.

II. A Survey of the Path toward the Cross of Christ

From Tyre and Sidon Jesus turned again to His own land. Henceforth, generally speaking, His path led toward the Cross. The conditions under which the Lord carried forward this part of His Life-Work are set forth in the incidents which are now to be considered.

1. *The Persistent Background of Wonder and Worship.* The first fact that conditioned His work at this time was the persistent background of popular wonder and worship. This fact had continued since the early days of the Lord's public ministry.² The common people heard Him gladly, and usually responded, with unprejudiced minds and hearts, to the appeals of Divine Personality, and to the truth which He spoke.

This fact of popular favor was kept constantly in mind throughout the Gospel Records. This popular favor was a strong force; and it became one of the powerful social factors with which the

²For an earlier analysis of this background of wonder and worship, see the introductory pages of Chapter V above.

Return through
Decapolis: Heal-
ing a Deaf and
Dumb Man
Matthew 15:29-31
Mark 7:31-37

enemies of Jesus had to reckon in their attempts to put Him to death.

The situation of Jesus, during this return from Tyre and Sidon, was of a semi-international character. The incident of healing occurred in Decapolis, east of Jordan and the Sea of Galilee, in a region which at that time was populated in part at least by non-Jewish peoples. Returning by a circuitous route from the regions of Tyre and Sidon, Jesus visited this land of the "Ten Cities," as its name signified. Coming toward the Sea of Galilee, perhaps near to the place where He had fed the five thousand, Jesus went up into a mountain, and the people in great multitude came to Him.

1. Situation
Matthew 15:29-31
Mark 7:31-37

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It was a busy day. The people brought "with them the lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and they cast them at His feet, and He healed them." The day was full of loving services that deeply touched the people. From among the many mercies, one notable instance of healing is made prominent. It was that of the deaf man who had an impediment in his speech. Jesus healed the man, having previously touched his ears and tongue in such way as to make him know that the healing power was coming forth from the Lord Jesus. This healing was done apart from the multitude, but apparently in the sight and hearing of them all. The central thing in the miracle was the divine command of Jesus by which the man was made to hear and to speak.

2. Activities of the Day

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The multitude recognized this source of power in Christ. They wondered at His works of healing, and "glorified the God of Israel." Their exultation rose to a climax of enthusiasm when Jesus had healed this man who was deaf and had the difficulty in his speech. Even the repeated prohibitions of the Lord Jesus could not restrain them from publishing the event. "They were beyond measure astonished;" and in simple sincerity they said, "He hath done all things well: He maketh even the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak."

3. Responses of the People

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This glimpse into the working day of Jesus shows several things. The crest of His popularity was past soon after He had fed the five thousand, but the response to His ministry was still powerful and enthusiastic. The opposing Jewish leaders had by no means stopped the progress of the Kingdom, as they had hoped to do. This persistent popular approval of Jesus was a

force with which His enemies had to reckon. "For fear of the people," His enemies repeatedly modified their plans to put Him to death. Furthermore, this eager enthusiasm of the people, with its volumes of publicity and consequent tax upon His time and energies, was at times a hindrance to the Lord Himself. He seems to have felt this pressure increasingly; for He desired now to work quietly with the Apostles, and to concentrate their attention upon the great impending event of His Death.

2. *The Personal Attitude of Jesus toward the People.* The previous incident gave a glimpse at the people's side of what was happening day after day. The next incident shows the divine side of the same picture. The same popularity which somewhat embarrassed the work of Jesus added a brighter touch of glory to His sympathy with and for the people who sought His services.

This sympathy was manifested in the Feeding of the Four Thousand. The people had been with Jesus for three days. The incident happened near the place where He had fed the five thousand; and the details of the miracle were much like those of the former miracle.³ There are, however, several underlying differences. In the former incident the hungry multitude was introduced as a problem; here it is regarded as a privilege. In the former situation the Apostles themselves seem to have shared in raising that problem (*Matthew 14:15*); here the question of feeding the people rises out of the heart of Jesus, Who calls the Apostles, on His own motion, into counsel on this question. The Feeding of the Five Thousand was recorded as the background and occasion of a great popular movement to make Jesus a King; the Feeding of the Four Thousand is an event recorded for its own sake and designed to reflect the divine sympathy of Jesus.

The central thought of this occasion was expressed in the words of Jesus to His Apostles: "I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with Me now three days, and have nothing to eat; and if I send them away fasting to their home, they will faint in the way; and some of them are come from afar." Those words were worthy of the Son of God. So also was the active sympathy that followed when He fed the hungry people. That was His own divine response to the praises of the people who had said, "He hath done all things well." He answered by ministering, from the deep and divine kindness of His own heart,

³See Chapter XI, pages 251-254.

to the needs of those who were so patient and loyal in their devotion to Him.

3. *The Refusal of His Enemies to Believe.* Another fact that continued to condition the work of Jesus at this time was the attitude of His enemies. Persistently, and with sinful determination, they refused to believe in Him.

This refusal was reflected in their desire for a sign. After sending away the multitude, Jesus had come by boat to the borders of Magadan, "into the parts of Dalmanutha," on the west coast of the Sea of Galilee. Here the scribes and Pharisees came to tempt Jesus by asking Him to show them a sign from Heaven. They had no desire to believe. Nor had they any lack of "signs" enough already in the life and work of the Son of God. They had watched His every movements, but always with a pre-determined mind not to believe in Him.

1. Desire for a Sign

Matthew 15:39;

16:1-4

Mark 8:10-13

Cf. Luke 12:54-56

Then came the reply of Jesus, wrung from His very heart. Sighing deeply in spirit, He said, "Why doth this generation seek a sign? Verily I say unto you, There shall

2. Repentance the Sign Prescribed

Matthew 16:2-4

Mark 8:12-13

He showed, by reference to their deductions about the weather, how they were wise to observe and to interpret the facts in the external world of *things*, but were totally blind to the one great *spiritual fact* of the Son of God living and laboring in their midst.

But why were they so blind? Why did they not see and accept the Son of God? Jesus explained. They were "an evil and adulterous generation," and therefore with-

3. Secret Source of Unbelief

out that purity of heart which leads to visions of God. Being evil in heart, and therefore blind in spirit, they desired a sign: that is, some external proof of that which their souls failed to recognize. But their real need was not for something external. They needed a change of heart, a change even of purpose to believe, and a purifying of their hearts which would make recognition and faith possible. They needed the sign of Jonah; that is, the proof of sin that leads to repentance. They needed an awakening touch of divine judgment upon their own sinful lives, such as should startle them with the realization of their enormous opposition to the Son of God. They asked for a sign, but they needed moral and spiritual transformation. Having clearly defined this

deepest need of His enemies, Jesus left them and departed on His way.

4. *The Slowness of the Apostles to Grasp the Truth.* A fourth fact with which Christ had to deal at this time was the slowness of the Apostles to understand the full and far-reaching significance of the truth. The general situation was that in which Christ warned His Apostles against the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees and the leaven of Herod. The incident is full of meaning.

**Leaven of the
Pharisees and of
Herod**
Matthew 16:5-12
Mark 8:14-21

First, there are here new notes of warning. The Disciples, having crossed the Sea with their Master, had forgotten to take bread; or, to be exact, they had not more than one loaf. "And Jesus said unto them, 'Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.'" To these words Mark adds also a note of warning against "the leaven of Herod."

**1. New Notes of
Warning**

Jesus, looking now toward the Cross, saw something new rising before Him and the progress of His Kingdom. Immediately, it was the combination of forces by which His own death would be achieved. There is no marvel that He should warn the Apostles against the Pharisees; for they had conducted an active opposition against Him and His work. But the Sadducees, who had recently united with the Pharisees in asking a sign from Him, had not hitherto been so active in their opposition. Jesus saw clearly the meaning of the changes then taking place. The Pharisees were determined to put Him to death. For this purpose, they were forming an alliance of factions with the Sadducees and others. Such an alliance might actively help in forwarding their plans. Certainly it would help defend the deed of darkness when it was done. All this Jesus saw clearly, and so warned against the insidious influence of this evil-minded combination.

Jesus foresaw also the hand of Herod in this opposition. More than the part that Rome should play in His own death was here in the mind of Christ. The deeper danger was that to the progress of His Kingdom. Rome was a world empire, with power to crush and to annihilate human agencies and human institutions. That power could not be faced directly by force. Necessary was it, therefore, that His Disciples hold fast to the truth, by which, through regenerating the hearts of men, His Kingdom should conquer the solid power of heathen empires. Even now Jesus saw the power of Rome being made an ally of His enemies

against His own life. Already He clearly foresaw their secret program, and the strong arm with which they hoped to strike Him down.

Piercing thus with divine insight through the recent demands of the Pharisees and Sadducees, the Son of God saw the deep-laid plans against Himself and His Kingdom. Hence His warning at this time against the "leaven" of His enemies, with whom His followers should hold careful commerce and beware of compromise. At the basis of His deeper concern there was a contrast between Himself as Divine, with divine resources, and the worldly combinations being formed against Him.

2. Failure of the Apostles to understand

The failure of the Apostles to recognize this underlying truth accounts for the manner in which Christ dealt with them on this occasion. He had warned them against an immediate movement which they had not seen. The remedy against that danger was in the spiritual resources of the Son of God, and in the truth that was to be exhibited through the lives of those within the Kingdom which He had established. But the Apostles, instead of perceiving these spiritual resources of success, had failed even to see that He was speaking, in the realm of the spirit, of subtle enmity, and of resources of divine truth and power. Instead of seeing this meaning, when He spoke of *leaven*, they began to debate the question of physical bread. They had no thought at that moment of spiritual enemies, and of subtle spiritual errors. Still farther were they from thinking of Christ and His resources for meeting such evil forces. Indeed, they were so far from thinking of Him, that, in their concern for physical bread, they had forgotten His power and goodness in feeding the multitudes.

This dual blindness of the Apostles accounts for the spirit in which Jesus made His reply. They needed instruction; but they needed something else first. Their minds were not then concerned with things spiritual. Hence Christ sharply rebuked their attitude of mind which gave rise to their want of understanding. But even in doing that He began with their own present physical concern, and turned their minds back to Himself as the great Source and Provider of the necessities of life. From this beginning of attention to the things of the spirit, He could go on with His warnings against subtle enemies, and with the thought of Himself as the source of strength to meet such enemies.

Two things, then, stand out with emphasis from this incident. There was need of further crystalizing the thought of the Apostles as to the nature of the Son of God. There were also new

forces arising against Him and the work of His Kingdom. Hence a more direct instruction of the Apostles, and a more outspoken method of dealing with His enemies, characterized the remaining part of Christ's Galilean Ministry, which is now drawing to its close.

5. *The Pressure from the Multitudes.* Before following up these definite lines of development, however, the records recognize another set of facts which condition the work of Jesus at this time. These hindrances, for such in a sense they were, came from the encroachments on His time and energies by the people who desired His personal services.

The problem that arose from this pressure has been reflected in the incident of Christ's healing the blind man near Bethsaida.

**Healing a Blind
Man at Bethsaida
Mark 8:22-26**

When the friends of the man brought him to Jesus within the city, the Lord led him by the hand to a place outside the village, presumably to avoid publicity. Then, probably for want of other means at hand, Jesus moistened the man's eyes with saliva, and then laid His own divine hand upon them. There was here a touch of natural remedy, and a deeper impression that the real source of the healing power was in Christ Himself. The two stages of the healing, wherein the man first saw imperfectly and then clearly, served to emphasize the same source of power in Jesus that effected the miracle.

The central truth of the incident, however, is the treatment accorded this man after he was healed. The healing was only an ordinary miracle, such as Jesus was constantly performing. But the attending circumstances were different. Jesus had led

**Prohibition
against Publicity**

the man outside the city to perform the healing. After the healing, Jesus forbade the man even to re-enter the city. This shows how careful Jesus was at this time to avoid attracting greater attention from the people in general, whose pressing demands for personal ministries were interfering with Christ's more intimate work of instructing the Apostles.

III. The Preparation of the Twelve Apostles

For a long time, after the healing of the blind man at Bethsaida, Jesus turned away from the crowd and devoted Himself almost exclusively to the Twelve Apostles. His purpose, through the following incidents which have an obvious undercurrent of logical connection, was to prepare the Apostles in mind and heart

for the ordeal of the Cross, to which Jesus was now definitely looking forward.

1. Testing Their Conception of Himself. These instructions began with a definite testing of the Twelve respecting the nature and personality of Jesus Christ. After all of their experiences with Him, what were their own conclusions? The obvious purpose of Jesus was to draw out their innermost thought, so that He might correct that

Peter's Confession
Matthew 16:13-20
Mark 8:27-30
Luke 9:18-21

and build upon that as His foundation. This testing was accomplished by the questions which called forth the Confession of Peter.

The incident of Peter's Confession occurred on the way to Caesarea Philippi. Seemingly Jesus had paused by the wayside to pray. He was alone with the Apostles. Perhaps at the conclusion of His prayer, He introduced His test, by asking what the people in general thought concerning His own identity. In answer, the Apostles gave the common speculations and convictions of the people, which included "John the Baptist,

1. Conviction of His Divine Character
Matthew 16:13-16
Mark 8:27-29
Luke 9:18-20

... Elijah, ... Jeremiah, ... or one of the prophets." Having thus focalized attention, Jesus put the question directly to the Apostles: "But who say ye that I am?" Peter, without hesitation, voiced the conviction of the group as a whole: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

That was the desired answer. It was the right conclusion, expressed in good form as a working basis for what was to follow.

Hence the commendations: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father Which is in Heaven. And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church; and the gates

of Hell shall not prevail against it. I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven. Then charged He the Disciples that they should tell no man that He was the Christ."

The expression of this conviction as to the Divine Personality of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was the central point in this incident. This is evident from the fact that Mark and Luke closed the record of the incident with that point, without adding

the commendation which Jesus made upon this confession of Peter. It will be noted also that Jesus, in His response to Peter, makes three special points. First, He stated that Peter was blessed because this conclusion had come to him as a spiritual revelation, showing that he was in right relation with God and with His Divine Spirit, a condition which Christ labored to bring about in all those to whom He ministered. Second, Christ stated that the transforming results of that spiritual revelation, represented in Simon's new name "Peter" (*John* 1:41-42), were to be the foundation, the defensive strength, the working principle, and the final test, of His Kingdom, as it was begun on earth and consummated in Heaven. And third, Jesus, for practical reasons in His immediate work; charged the Apostles not to advertise the thought of this occasion, thus showing that He regarded the conclusion of His Divine Saviorship as the central point in this incident.

2. *The Price of Saviorship.* From that time, building logically upon the truth of Peter's Confession, Jesus began to teach the Apostles the meaning of Divine Saviorship, and the price that He must pay for being the Savior of the world. In detail He began to show "how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up."

To Peter's mind such a course of events was unthinkable. Hence he began to rebuke the Lord, and to say, "Be it far from Thee, Lord! This shall never be unto Thee!" But Jesus rebuked Peter, and said, "Get thee behind Me, Satan: thou art a stumbling block unto Me: for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men!"

In these words Jesus announced that the Way of Life was the way of the Cross. That was God's way; and all opposition thereto was in the nature of a hindrance from evil origins. That was the Way for the Son of God, Who must be obedient even unto death, if He would save those who were already dead in their sins. That, moreover, is the way of life for all men, as Jesus forthwith announced to His Apostles: "If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."

3. Observations on This Conclusion of Divinity

Prophecy of Death and Resurrection
Matthew 16:21-28
Mark 8:31; 9:1
Luke 9:22-27

1. Life by Way of the Cross
Matthew 16:22-24
Mark 8:32-34
Luke 9:23

Then, briefly, Jesus laid down certain tests of a life that is worthy of the Kingdom of God. First, merely living to live is not adequate to Christian discipleship. Life is not an end in itself. Life is an instrument for attainment, a thing to be spent in the achievement of results worthy of all that redeemed life represents. Again, living to gain mere earthly ends and temporal results

is not adequate. No price, not even a world itself, can justify so low a purpose in life. Men's souls will always outweigh all possible gain of that kind. Deeper, too, is the truth, that all physical life and all physical things are rightly rated and used only when they are made the means to spiritual ends in life.

Christ's conception of life should be thoroughly understood at this point; for these things are intimately connected with the announcement of His own Death and Resurrection. He thought of life as one and entire. With Him, it was not *here* and *hereafter*, but *now* and *forevermore*. To

Him death and resurrection were mere incidents in the accomplishing of a full-orbed life and purpose. So thought He of life for all men. The only thing that counts is a secure relation with that which is eternal. Hence He made reference at this time to the consummation of His Kingdom, and to the awards of that Kingdom.

The things, therefore, that count, as Christ thinks of them, are two in number: a courage of faith that will stand, facing down the shaming of an evil world; and deeds that are right, as the true basis of spiritual rewards. These are the things that link men inseparably to the eternal, and open the way for the power of the Kingdom of Christ to be felt, as He foresaw that it would be felt in that and succeeding generations. Thus Jesus faced the Cross with obedience and confidence, knowing that the travail of His soul, as Isaiah has suggested, would bring certain and ample satisfaction.

3. *The Eternal Glory of the Son of God.* The incident of the Transfiguration was the logical sequent of the preceding lesson.

It was an illustration of the fundamental truth of life, spiritual and eternal. But more than that, it was an exhibition of the eternal glory of Jesus Christ the Son of God. Three points of special interest stand forth in the

records of this event.

2. Tests of Discipleship

Matthew 16:25-28

Mark 8:35-38; 9:1

Luke 9:24-27

3. Christ's Conception of Life

The Transfiguration

Matthew 17:1-13

Mark 9:2-13

Luke 9:28-36

The exhibition of the glory of Jesus Christ was of first importance. This exhibition was given as an offset to any discouragement the Apostles may have felt respecting

**1. Exhibition
of Glory**

Matthew 17:1-4

Mark 9:2-4

Luke 9:28-31

His own Death. They were thus permitted to see the Son of God, as it were, in His triumphant and eternal state. They were also privileged here to see Him in His essential connections with the eternal purposes of God, and to see that His death was involved in those divine purposes. (See *Acts* 2:23-24). The Law and the Prophets spoke, on this occasion, in the person of Moses and of Elijah, and they spoke to Him about His Death, which was soon to be accomplished at Jerusalem. Thus these authorities from Heaven connected Jesus Christ and His death with all of God's revealed purposes of judgment and mercy, of life and hope, for the world.

Again, the character and kingship of Jesus Christ received special emphasis on this occasion. The Apostles, however, in

**2. Character and
Kingship of Christ**

Matthew 17:4-6

Mark 9:5-7

Luke 9:32-35

their amazement, did not, at first, clearly get this truth. Instead, they proposed, in their exultation, to build there three tabernacles, as if permanently to prolong the experience. But that was not the thing to do, as the voice from Heaven soon indicated. The supreme truth was that of the divine character and approval of Jesus and His consequent right to sovereign authority. Such was the truth stated by the voice from Heaven which said, "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him."

These words had a double application at that time. First, they had a retrospective and summarizing value. Similar testimony was given at the beginning of Christ's public ministry when He was being baptized. Then the Father from Heaven said only these words, "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased."⁴ Those words were logical then, and adequate; for the Son of God was then only being introduced to the world. At this later date the Father added the command to *hear the Son*, that is, to obey Him. This addition was both logical and right after the rich and effective experience which men had had with the Son of God since He was first divinely introduced to the world.

But there is another thought here. In those great days Jesus was emphasizing a new aspect of His life-work: it was the tragic program of His Saviorship through death. From this point of

⁴See Chapter III, pages 69-70; and Chapter XXV, page 608.

view these words of the Father's testimony say three things. First, Jesus is the Son of God. Things might soon arise that would be hard to reconcile with this truth; but the truth itself must stand firm in the minds and hearts of His Apostles. Furthermore, His life-work was well pleasing to the Father. That is, His manner of service thus far, and His exposition of the tragic future immediately before Him, were according to the truth and foreknowledge of God. Finally, it was the duty of men then, and now as well, to fall in with that divine plan of life which the Son of God was consciously working out in that day. This command of the Father means that men must recognize both the authority of Christ's teachings and His kingship over the lives of men.

In the closing records of this event, there is an interest in the care with which Jesus guarded this sacred experience. Blessed

3. Sacredness of the Experience
Matthew 17:7-13
Mark 9:8-13
Luke 9:36

were the eyes that had seen the glory that was manifested; but what they had seen was not to be published as a sensation for the wonder of men. "Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of Man be risen from the dead," was the prohibition laid upon these

chosen witnesses. Nothing was to be gained by such publication; and Luke adds that the Apostles kept the secret, telling "no man in those days any of the things which they had seen." The vision was immediately for the Apostles. Its purpose was to give power to the testimony of these chosen witnesses when they should later represent Christ and His Kingdom before the world. Hence Christ's care to guard the experience. Hence also the re-assuring manner in which He talked to the Apostles about this sacred experience, identifying the persons and promises with which they were familiar with the facts of ancient prophecy and with God's program of salvation for the world.

4. The Condition of Power—Righteousness. From the Mount of Transfiguration Jesus, with the three chosen witnesses, descended to the valley below, where the other

1. Healing the Demoniac Boy
Matthew 17:14-21
Mark 9:14-29
Luke 9:37-43

Apostles were trying in vain to cast out an unclean spirit from a boy who had been sorely afflicted from his birth. There Jesus taught the Apostles and the people that the secret of power lies in a life that conforms to

the laws of God. The Apostles had seen the glory on the Mount; but here in the valley it is shown that only by a faith that conforms life to the laws of God can men partake of that glory. Such seems to be the inner logic of this incident at this time.

The Apostles at the foot of the Mountain had failed to heal the afflicted boy. There was great excitement among the multitude gathered there. The scribes were asking the Apostles questions. Evidently a quarrel was going on. But when the multitude saw Jesus approaching, they ran to meet Him, being amazed and offering Him great salutations. And when He had asked about the cause of the excitement, the father of the afflicted boy explained that he had brought his son to the Apostles, that the case was very desperate, and that the Apostles had been unable to effect a cure from the affliction. The excitement doubtless had arisen from the taunts of the scribes because the Apostles had thus failed in their efforts to perform the miracle of healing.

**(1) Failure of
the Apostles**

But the healing was easily within the divine power of Jesus. In order, however, to make the miracle spiritually helpful to all concerned, Jesus cleared His way to the miracle by dealing first with the people, and then with the father of the boy, and finally, in private instruction, with the Apostles themselves. To the people in general, He pointed out their lack of faith, which hindered the working of all miracles. "O faithless and perverse generation," He said, "how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him to Me!" Thus He rebuked their spirit of contention and ill-nature, which arose from a deeper condition of evil in their hearts. That was Christ's direct analysis of the general background of the failure.

**(2) Divine Act
of Healing
by Jesus**

Then He turned to the father, whose boy was agonizing in his affliction. After explaining the boy's desperate condition, the father besought the Lord for help: "if Thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us!" That was the key-note to the father's faith, which yet was not clear. Why should he limit or condition the power of God? Hence the retort of Jesus: "If thou canst! All things are possible to him that believeth!" These piercing words went to the man's heart, and he caught the suggestion. The condition was not in Jesus, but in the man. "I believe," he said; "help Thou mine unbelief!" This prayer for a more perfect faith opened the way for the touch of divine power; and Jesus healed the boy by one authoritative command.

"And they were all astonished at the majesty of God." Such was the general effect upon the people. But the Apostles were deeply concerned about their own failure, and asked Jesus why they could not cast out the evil spirit from the boy. In reply,

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Jesus gave the underlying truth of this incident. It was this: that power is from God, and works only in harmony with His laws. That is the general truth. In the moral sphere, His power is available only where there is a faith that rightly recognizes God's character, and conforms life to His laws of righteousness. "This kind can come out by nothing, save by prayer and fasting." In the world of external nature, this truth is illustrated by the mustard seed, which grows by the proper laws of its life ordained of God.

So does moral and spiritual achievement in men come from response to, and from harmony with, the laws of God. He who perfectly works with God has with his efforts, and back of them, the almightiness of Jehovah. When man's faith thus perfectly links his soul with God, to that man nothing shall be impossible; for the world moves by fixed and divine law to certain conclusions. There was that in this occasion, however, which showed to Jesus the lack of such faith, first in the people, and then in the father, and finally in the Apostles. Possibly they were all quarreling instead of praying.

The situation was intense, and the miracle caused the people greatly to marvel at the divine power and majesty of Jesus. But the thoughts of Jesus, while others were exulting over His present achievements, were turned toward the contrasting facts of His own sufferings, death, and rising again from the dead. While passing quietly on through Galilee, He solemnly impressed these facts upon the Apostles. "Let these words sink into your ears," He said: "for the Son of Man shall be delivered up into the hands of men." The full intent of this statement was not understood by the Apostles; and they were afraid, possibly because He had recently rebuked their lack of faith, to ask Him for a definite explanation; yet they did understand enough of His words to fill their hearts with sadness. The fuller meaning, however, that His true measure of divine glory should appear only after His triumph over death and the grave, did not come to the Apostles until after His Resurrection from the dead.

5. *Three Duties of Christian Life.* From the thought of His own death, Jesus turned to the needs of His Apostles, and emphasized three imperative duties that rest upon every Christian life.

The first of these belongs to the civic relations of life. Here Christ gave His divine sanction to the institution of government,

**(3) Underlying
Truth of
Righteousness**

**2. Glory vs. the
Cross
Matthew 17:22-23
Mark 9:30-32
Luke 9:43-45**

and to the duty of loyal support of the governments under which men live their lives. Of course Christ would never sanction the tyrannies of bad governments, which are

1. Civic Duty

Matthew 17:24-27

only misgovernments. But note how He here emphasized the principle of loyalty. He suggest that kings take tribute not of their sons but of strangers. All sovereignty belongs to God. His Son, therefore, should be free of tribute. Yet the Son of God would avoid even the danger of misleading anyone in respect to the duty here considered. Therefore He provided the shekel and paid the taxes in His own name to the government under which He then lived, and also instructed His Apostle Peter likewise to pay his taxes in support of that government.

The second duty here emphasized belongs to the spiritual side of life. It has to do with the right relation of the soul to Christ, and to His Kingdom of Life and Grace.

2. Vital Faith

Matthew 18:1-14

Mark 9:33-50

Luke 9:46-50

Here, as always, the thing required, as necessary in life, is a vital faith in Jesus Christ. This duty Christ emphasized by analyzing the four characteristics of that faith which He would have the Apostles to develop in their own hearts and to promote in the hearts of men in all ages of the world.

Faith, first of all, must be careful to serve. Vital faith *works by love*, as Paul describes it in another Scripture.⁵ That kind of

(1) Careful to Serve

Matthew 18:1-5

Mark 9:33-37

Luke 9:46-48

faith is a condition of greatness in the Kingdom of Christ. Proper faith seeks service, and not merely an exalted place in the world. This question of preferment in position, however, had been under dispute even by the Apostles. But Jesus called them to Himself; and, by setting a little child in their midst as an example, He taught them two important lessons. The source of greatness in the spiritual world is the self-forgetful unambitious spirit of the little child. That is where greatness begins. Furthermore, the service that counts is one that is related to Christ. When Christ is rightly recognized, no service is too small to bring about great results. Even a kindness to a little child *in the name of Christ* expresses an effective faith; for it brings the soul into vital touch with Christ and with the Father in Heaven. Faith, first of all, works by love in careful service.

⁵Galatians 5:6, 13, 14; 1. Thessalonians 1:3.

Again, right faith seeks to exalt Christ. Such faith is always acceptable to God. This is true whether Christ be exalted as the

(2) Careful to
Exalt Christ
Mark 9:38-41

source of power in service, or as the one to whom honor is to be rendered in the service done. John seems to have thought otherwise until his mind was set right by the Lord

Himself. John had desired to restrain a certain disciple from service in the name of Christ because that disciple followed not after the Apostles. But Jesus corrected this error by applying a deeper test of the heart. "There is no man who shall do a mighty work in my name, and be able quickly to speak evil of Me. For he that is not against us is for us." That is the real test of integrity. Nor shall the smallest service done with that intent fail of its reward. Even the indirect exaltation of Christ in the giving of a cup of cold water to a disciple *because he is Christ's* shall be effective in securing a reward. However, the vital thing always in such faith is the conscious purpose in it to exalt Christ. Without that purpose, the casting out of devils, and the cup of water, would alike be of no avail.

Hence the next character of faith, and the emphasis which Christ gave to it. The believer must carefully maintain the integrity of his relations with Christ. As it

(3) Careful to
Maintain Integrity
of Faith
Matthew 18:6-9
Mark 9:42-48

bears upon others, this is a solemn duty; because it is a very great sin to cause even the person of weakest faith to stumble. Here was an immediate answer to the complaint of John. The truth has also a more general

application. No sin is greater than that of misleading an immortal soul.⁶ It increases damnation to him who misleads. It brings disaster to those misled. And it defrauds the Lord Jesus Christ. Faith must issue in life and leadership that are safe to others. The truth and the Spirit of Christ must prevail.

As respects the bearing of this duty upon a man's own life and destiny, he must maintain the integrity of his faith. He must pay the price of such integrity, whatever that price may be. He must remove from his own life everything that would cause him to stumble. The alternatives here are sharply drawn. It is either Christ or an eternal hell,—a hell of fire and of eternal anguish. To him who clearly faces these alternatives, the loss of a hand, or a foot, or an eye, is a small loss. The eternal welfare of the

⁶To the mind of Paul no sin was more intolerable than the sin of misleading the minds and lives of others in respect to spiritual truth. See the following statements: *Galatians* 3:1; 5:12; 2. *Thessalonians* 3:2. Compare also the *Epistle of Jude*; and 2 *Peter*, 2:1-22; and the treatment of heresy in *The First Epistle of John*.

soul is the supreme question. Faith must hold fast to Christ, whatever the price that the believer must pay.

Finally, faith must be careful to work in harmony with God's attitude toward the weaker ones among His children. Mark suggests, in a quotation from Christ, that such harmony is the fundamental business and test of a Christian life. Such saltiness the Christian must have in his life, else his life is worthless. Matthew quotes Christ as giving a solemn warning against even an unsympathetic attitude toward one of God's little ones. They are God's peculiar care; as Christ illustrates by the parable of the lost sheep, wherein the shepherd's greatest joy was over the one sheep that was lost, rather than over the ninety and nine which went not astray. Even so the Father in Heaven, in the divineness of His love, has a special care for the weak and the helpless. He loves them more, not because they went astray, but because, having gone astray, their need for His love is therefore greater. So must the faith of men express itself toward others, as the Heavenly Father has expressed His love toward those who are in the deepest need of His love and loving kindness.

The third duty—that of forgiveness—naturally follows at this point. This duty is social; and, as here considered, forgiveness becomes a great constructive factor in social conduct. In His discussion of this subject, the Lord Jesus showed three things: namely, How to right the wrongs done by men to men; How often such wrongs should be made right; and Why men should be careful thus to right their difficulties one with another. Throughout His discussion, also, the Lord lays the responsibility in this matter where it must ever rest, if men are to forgive as God expects them to forgive.

How shall a wrong be righted? Who shall take the initiative? The Son of God says to do it this way. "And if thy brother sin against thee, go, shew him his fault between thee and him alone; if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother." That is the first step,—a step to be taken by the *offended*, and not by the offender. That is a difficult and unpopular beginning; for it is far easier to sit down in smug complacency, and wait for a confession on the part of the offender. But that is not right. Christ has here given the only proper way to begin. Let the man in the right, because he is in the right, take the initiative. The

**(4) Careful to
Work in Harmony
with God**
Matthew 18:10-14
Mark 9:49-50

3. Forgiveness
Matthew 18:15-35

**(1) How to Right
a Wrong**
Matthew 18:15-20

offender is already offside with truth. Then let them settle the trouble in secret, with that charity which covers a multitude of sins. The world has troubles enough of its own, without giving publicity to difficulties of a personal nature.

But suppose the offender will not be won back to the right in this quiet personal way. What then? This next. Let the offended man take two or three personal witnesses,—just enough for strength, and not enough for publicity; and let him use them in a second more powerful effort to win back the erring man. But if the man refuse thus to be won to the right again, then let the offended man take the matter before the Church. For what purpose? For accusation? For common gossip? Not at all; but for prayer. Let the Church unite in asking God to help win the offending man back to the right. If he still refuses even thus to be won, he shows either a heathen ignorance of God, or a sinful disregard for Him and His truth; and being so understood, the offender then should be regarded, by the offended man and his friends, as an object of pitying love and of an active missionary effort.

There is hardly a possibility, however, that any person could pass through the schedule here outlined and come out un-won for the right. That is exactly what Christ meant. When men go down on their knees before God with their differences, those differences soon disappear. When men thus sincerely pray, they do touch a power that *binds* and *loosens*, a power that touches the depths of the soul where time and eternity are one and the same thing. On their knees before God, men come into contact with awe-inspiring thoughts of sin, and judgment, and mercy, and eternity, that startle the soul away from its attitudes of petty opposition to men. The soul that prays must, perforce, be at peace with men.

The certainty of this result was not a matter about which Christ Himself had any doubt. He affirmed "that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father Who is in Heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." That is, when man has done his full duty, God Himself assumes the responsibility for the results. That is a glorious truth; but the real meaning of this excellent assurance has often been lost by severing it from its rightful place here as a part of the truth of forgiveness. Let man do his part, and God will bring about the results of peace and good will.

There is in the words just quoted a very pointed challenge and

test of men's hearts; for this assurance never failed, except where men failed. Praying men must forgive, and must allow themselves to be forgiven. Out in the Middle West there is a Field Secretary of one of the Churches who has had much experience in the adjustment of congregational difficulties. He might be called an expert at this business. His first step in adjustment is to ask the people to kneel with him and pray over their troubles. The results, when men pray together, show no exceptions; for sin is dissolved from the heart when the spirit of prayer enters. He affirms that he never saw but one group of people who would not forgive and be forgiven; and that was a congregation who positively refused to pray over their difficulties. So it is with personal troubles; when men pray together, they rise from their knees friends and not enemies. Will a man go the length of praying with and for the man who has given offence? Here is an effective test of the human spirit.

But how often shall a man be expected to forgive? How often shall he go through this program of effort to win an erring brother? Peter saw the meaning of this out-

**(2) How Often
Should a Person
Forgive?**

Matthew 18:21-22

line of duty which the Lord had made. Peter therefore thought that he was making a very liberal tax upon human goodness when he asked: "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Until seven times?" But Jesus had quite another conception of this imperative duty. Hence He replied, "I say not unto thee, 'Until seven times'; but Until seventy times seven." That was the oriental way of saying, through the symbolism of figures, that there was no limit to the number of times a man should forgive and labor to win back an erring and an offending person. The truth is this. Forgiveness is a fact, a social status. It must be absolute and complete. As often therefore as there is an occasion to forgive there must be forgiveness. That is what these figures of Jesus really signify.

Why should men forgive their fellowmen? It is only when men have forgiven others that they may expect or hope to escape the just judgment of a righteous God. For-

(3) Why Forgive?

Matthew 18:23-35

giveness is necessary also if a man desires to be Christ-like, and to have any part in the Kingdom of Christ. One great work of the Kingdom in the world is to nurture and exhibit this Christian spirit of forgiveness among men, and to vindicate the just judgment of God upon those who fail or refuse to forgive their debtors.

That is the fearful lesson of the parable with which the Lord Jesus illustrated this solemn duty. The first man owed one thousand talents, and was forgiven all the debt. That represents what God has to forgive us. The second man owed one hundred pence, which his fellow-servant refused to forgive. That represents what a man may have to forgive his fellowman. The ratio here is about 600,000:1. Literally read, the figures mean that God has to forgive men 600,000 times as much as they have to forgive one another. By these figures Christ means to say, that the man who will not forgive the little that he is expected to forgive is simply beneath the considerations of divine mercy. The unforgiving man in the parable was brought to judgment and prison until he had paid the full debt. "So shall also My Heavenly Father do unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother from your hearts." That is the simple law, and also the divine ultimatum, on the duty of forgiveness.⁷

In locating the responsibility involved in the duty of forgiveness, Christ had here two things clearly in mind. The first is that the duty of the initiative in righting a wrong rests with the offended. Any one may see that this position is perfectly logical and right. The offended man is in the right, and is, therefore, in position to help the offender to find again the right from which he has departed. From this truth there is no appeal. The offender should, of course, confess his wrong, and repent, and ask for forgiveness; but that is entirely another matter; and a motion for which the offended party may not wait for a single moment.

The other point here is that the duty of forgiveness is universal and absolute. The truth taught here is the same that is taught throughout the Word of God. Men must forgive; and there is no justification for an estrangement between man and man. There is nothing that can justify a man for holding an offense in his heart against another person. Christ has here told how to right a wrong. He has affirmed that, if a man will do his appointed duty, God will insure a settlement.

And if settlement should fail, even then, as Christ here states, a man may not hold the offense in his heart. The offender, if he should ultimately refuse to settle the trouble, should still be forgiven, and be held by the offended party "as the Gentile (or heathen man) and the publican (or sinner)"; that is, as an object

⁷See Chapter IX, pages 195 and 200.

of Christian missionary effort,—one to be loved with pity and compassion such as that wherewith God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son to save those who were living in sin. There is no place in God's world ^{for} an offense in one man's heart against another man. That is what Christ taught in this passage; and the truth becomes highly impressive as it was immediately exemplified in the spirit with which Christ met His enemies who were even then plotting His own death.

IV. The New Purpose of Christ's Enemies

By this time the enemies of Christ had come to the definite conclusion that they must make way with Jesus. Their plan was to kill Him. Their earlier personal rejection of Him had gotten them nowhere. Their later attempts to thwart the progress of His Kingdom had failed. They saw nothing left to them but to defeat this new movement under Christ by killing Him Who gave that movement its origin, leadership and power.

The whole situation emerged quickly into view in connection with Christ's attendance upon the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem. Jesus was in Galilee, completing His ministry in that province. There He quietly avoided direct collision with those whose plans of murder He knew full well. The Feast was approaching. Naturally the question arose as to how He would attend this feast.

His brethren, with shortsighted impatience, urged upon Him the supposed wisdom of an aggressive publicity. They desired Him to declare Himself openly before all the people. Their idea was to carry the day by a great public declaration of His character, and claims, and purposes. They doubtless thought of Him as desiring to set up some kind of temporal kingdom in Jerusalem. But He replied that, because of what He was, it was wise and necessary, for a time at least, to exercise the prudence of quiet procedure with His own divine plans. He desired to avoid too great publicity.

Therefore, following His deeper wisdom, Jesus went up alone to the feast. There, before making His presence known, He was doubtless greatly interested in seeing and hearing that He was Himself, though still unknown to them, the center of interest in that great and diverse multitude. Every person, it seemed, in one way or in another. was talking about Jesus.

**Christ and the
Feast of
Tabernacles**
John 7:1-53

**1. Avoiding Pub-
licity**
John 7:1-9

**2. Testing Out
Public Sentiment**
John 7:10-13

The leaders of the Jews were seeking for Him, expecting, or at least hoping, that they might be able to carry out their evil designs against His life. Evidently the secret of their plans had "leaked out"; for the multitudes were talking and murmuring, probably debating also and quarreling, concerning Jesus. Some defended Him as a good man. Others, inspired no doubt with arguments from the central opposition, declared that He was leading the people astray. One can easily see what was happening. The enemies of Christ were "feeling out" the temper of the common people as to their probable attitude toward the plans of murder which these rulers had in mind. So these appointed agitators tested out the sentiment of the people, and learned that there was great danger of a popular re-action against the iniquity then in the secret heart of Christ's enemies.

1. *The Public Proclamation of Jesus.* Moving thus quietly among the people, Jesus saw that His enemies were working their evil schemes, and that the strength of the people would be with Him, if He should make Himself known. With these facts before Him, He came forth, in the midst of the feast, to teach publicly in the Temple. He had some things to proclaim that would fit definitely into the situation then before Him.

His first act was to expose the murderous purposes of His enemies. When He began to teach, the wisdom of His words

**1. Plans of His
Enemies Exposed**
John 7:14-24

caused men to marvel. Defending the origin and the integrity of His teaching, He affirmed that His messages were from the Heavenly Father, and that the truth which

He spoke might be recognized and attested by any one who would compare these things in actual life with the revealed will of God. He affirmed, further, that His own unselfish devotion to the will of God, and to the divine mission of His own life, attested the perfect moral integrity of His life-work. Having made these points, He then boldly challenged His enemies to say why they desired to kill Him. Doubtless they were astonished at this knowledge and revelation of their secret intentions; and they tried to deny that they had any such desire or plan. But Jesus knew their hearts. However, He appealed to them again to act upon facts and truth, and not upon prejudice, to judge righteous judgment in their attitudes toward Himself.

The very boldness of these words of Jesus caused some to wonder that the Jews did not take Jesus at once and put Him to death, as they had planned. One of two things seemed to be true: either the rulers of the Jews did not recognize this to be

the Christ Whom they desired to kill, or else they secretly admitted His Lordship, and so feared to take hold of Him. Those

2. Christ's Divine Origin Defended **John 7:25-36** who raised these questions straightway denied the Lordship of Jesus. This denial led Jesus to re-affirm His divine origin and divine character as coming from the Father,

Whom His enemies did not know, but Whom He did know, because He had come from, and was sent by, the Father in Heaven.

Because of these words His enemies desired the more to take Jesus; but the solemn majesty of His proclamation restrained them from violence. "But of the multitude

Christ's Nature His Own Defense many believed on Him; and they said, 'When the Christ shall come, will He do more signs than those which this man hath

done?' The Pharisees heard the multitude murmuring these things concerning Him; and the chief priests and the Pharisees sent officers to take Him." When Jesus saw this movement, His thought turned to His own death and return to His Father; and, while thinking on these things, He thought also how absolutely His life was beyond any power or reach of His enemies. His death, should they accomplish that as they desired, would only mean His going, in triumph, where they could neither find Him nor come to Him. But His thought of these things was not, of course, understood at that time by those who heard Him speak.

So the contention went on, possibly for half of the feast-time. But the master stroke of Jesus came on the last great day of the

3. Exhortation to the People **John 7:34-44**

feast, when He stood and cried, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this He spake of the Spirit, which they that believed on Him were to receive." The effect of that announcement was electrifying. There was an immediate acclamation in His favor. Some proclaimed Him a prophet; others, the Christ; while others still contended that the Christ should not come out of Galilee. The animated division of the people that followed was probably just what Jesus intended to bring about at that time; for that result meant that Jesus had again thwarted His enemies in their attempt to win public sentiment in support of their wicked plans.

The evidences of their defeat are multiplied in the closing moments of this scene. A practical acknowledgment of this defeat is seen in the ill humor of Christ's enemies, who show

themselves to be bad losers. The men sent to arrest Jesus did not dare to arrest Him. When an explanation was demanded,

**4. Evidences
of Defeat**

John 7:45-53

these officers simply said, "Never man spake like this Man!" But the ill-tempered rulers had no ear for facts. With scorn they replied, "Are ye also led astray?" Then, as if to close the matter with autocratic and final authority, they said, "Hath any of the rulers believed on Him, or of the Pharisees?"

But all the rulers were not of this same mind. Perhaps it was in answer to the assumption of absolute and final rejection of

**Nicodemus vs.
the Rulers**

Christ by the rulers of the Jews, that Nicodemus rose in defense of the right. He saw both the blindness of his fellow-leaders and the injustice of their course. "Doth our law judge a man, except it first hear from himself and know what he doeth?" This he said, by way of calling the rulers back to a sense of right. But he was promptly answered with a sneer. "Art thou also of Galilee?" they asked. "Search, and see that out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." This last was a thrust at Nicodemus for attempting to instruct them, as well as at Jesus Himself. The tone of all this parley shows the straits to which the enemies of Christ were put on this occasion to maintain their cause. Thus defeated, the enemies of Christ retired from the scene, to lay other plots, while the multitude went to their own homes, and Jesus withdrew to the Mount of Olives, doubtless to pray.

2. *The Arm of Rome in Evidence.* The enemies of Jesus had failed, as already described, in their appeal for popular support of their plans to kill Him. Immediately they

**A Test before
the Law**

John 8:1-11

resorted to another manner of carrying that plan into effect. When they failed to carry the day by storm, as it were, through their appeal to mob prejudices, they saw that they would have to secure some kind of legal sanction to their plans of murder in order to defend their action before the public. In a word, it was now plain to His enemies, that they would have to incriminate Jesus before the law, if they hoped to carry out their wicked designs against His life.

In order to do this, they first laid a sort of double legal trap, calling Rome to their aid. On the surface, however, it looked as if they were making an honest inquiry about a point of Jewish law. The situation was this. The rulers of the Jews brought into the Lord's presence a fallen woman, who had been taken in

the very act of sin. About her guilt, therefore, there could be no question. Then they quoted the Mosaic Law applicable to the case in hand, showing that Moses commanded

1. Nature of Their Legal Trap that such a person should be stoned to death.⁸ This citation of the Law was to prevent Jesus, as they thought, from dodging the question by pretended ignorance of the law in the case. With these facts of guilt and of law well defined, they demanded of Jesus, "What then sayest Thou of her?" This they did to make a test of Jesus, "that they might have whereof to accuse Him."

The purpose of this trap was to create a dilemma that would catch Jesus, as they intended, whichever way He might turn in His reply. If He should say that the woman should not be stoned, then His enemies argued that they would have a definite case against Him for contradicting the Law of Moses. But if He advised, following the Law, that she should be stoned, then they evidently intended to carry out His advice or suggestion. This stoning of the woman to death, however, would violate the Roman Law, since Rome had taken away from the Jewish courts the power of life and death. But the rulers meant to stone the woman, and then lay the responsibility for violating the law upon Jesus. Thus they hoped that between the Jewish law and that of Rome they would catch the Son of God. They planned either to discredit and incriminate Him as a prophet and religious teacher, or else to make a case against Him before the Roman Government.

But they failed. At first, Jesus merely stooped and wrote upon the sand. This was an ancient oriental way of signifying unconcern with the matter then under question.

3. Results of the Trap The Son of God, with perfect knowledge of the situation, was not to be trapped, or "tempted," in that way. But when they insisted upon an answer, He raised Himself, in all the fullness of His divine majesty, and said, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her."

The bolt struck home. Even then those rulers were standing there, in the Temple of God, and before the Law of God, with murder in their hearts. They were even ready to take His life, regardless of Roman Law to the contrary. But they were thunderstruck by this sudden sizing up of the situation. Probably they looked at each other for a moment in shamefaced astonish-

⁸Compare *Leviticus* 20:10, and *Deuteronomy* 22:22.

ment; and then they retired from the scene, the oldest and hardest sinner in the group leading the way.

Left thus alone with the persecuted woman, whose spirit was crushed with sin and shame, Jesus could deal with her in a manner befitting the Lord of Law, and justice, and mercy. Rising again from His writing, which He had resumed while His thrust at the moral consciences of His enemies had its effect, He saw what had happened. He had effectively thrown the responsibility of dealing with this case back upon the accusers of the woman. He had also startled them with the suggestion that He knew the evil contents of their own hearts. Thus had He caused them to see, and by their actions to admit, that they could stand neither before the Law of God nor before that of Rome. Hence the softening effect of Christ's immediate inquiry. "Woman, where are they? Did no man condemn thee?" This was not an expression of surprise. It was rather an assurance that all stand alike before the judgment and the mercy of God. In this way Jesus turned the woman's heart from the fear of judgment to the hope of forgiving grace; and then He closed the scene with those words of possibly the divinest sympathy ever spoken, "Neither do I condemn thee: go thy way; from henceforth sin no more."

3. *Plain Talk on Moral Blindness.* The inhuman want of sympathy, and the evident depths of moral guilt, on the part of those who had made a victim of this woman in their efforts to entrap the Son of God, gave rise to some plain speaking when Jesus next addressed the Pharisees on this general occasion. His subject then was the fundamental question of truth and conduct. He analyzed the causes of moral blindness and ungodly action on the part of those to whom He was then speaking.

**Jesus Christ the
Light of the
World
John 8:12-30**

Standing in the Treasury of the Temple, Jesus proclaimed, "I am the Light of the World; he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the Light of Life." This the Pharisees, of course, disallowed. They refused to recognize the Divinity of Christ. Instead, they began to quibble about the authority and the validity of the witness which He bore to Himself. In setting their minds right on this matter, Jesus affirmed that He knew the facts of His nature and origin, which they did not know; that their estimation was "after the flesh," even when they were dealing with spiritual matters; that they were ignorant of the fulfillment of their own

**1. Christ-Light vs.
Pharisaic
Blindness
John 8:12-20**

law of witness-bearing as it applied to Himself, because they had failed, or refused, to recognize the Father's divine testimony in the case; and that they had so failed, or refused, because they knew neither the Father nor the Son, and were therefore walking in spiritual and moral blindness. These searching words were spoken in public, and yet no man dared to lay hands on the Son of God.

There was evidently a personal majesty and authority about Jesus Christ that struck His enemies with awe and fear, else they

2. Causes of Their Blindness

John 8:21-30

would never have endured Him to continue

His analysis. Touching deeper on the question of their blindness, He explained why they refused to accept the facts of His own

Divine Personality. Their blind rejection of Him, as Christ here analyzed the situation, arose from two fundamental causes.

First, He and they were different in nature and spiritual destiny. When Jesus said, "I go away, and ye shall seek Me, and shall die in your sin: whither I go, ye cannot come," He meant more than mere spir-

(1) Contrasted Origin

itual geography. He was talking about essential natures and spiritual destiny,—the

question of life and death to their souls. As they were then, it was impossible that they should ever enter that glory whence He had come, and to which He should soon return. Since they had closed the door of faith against Him, they had, in that act of rejection, closed the door of hope to their own souls. As they now stood, there was nothing in common between Him and them.

But even this spiritual truth He had to explain in the following statement of contrasts:

"Ye are from beneath; I am from above:

"Ye are of this world; I am not of this world."

That was the basic trouble. In origin, principle, attitude, and practice, they were sinful; and being such, they had scorned the only Savior, and could therefore only die in their sins; "for except ye believe that I am He," said Jesus, "ye shall die in your sins." They saw His meaning: that they must acknowledge His true nature as the Son of God.

Instead of accepting Him, however, they began to question: "Who art Thou?"

(2) Rejection of Facts

The Lord Jesus made a pointed reply. "Even that," He said, "which I have also spoken unto you from the beginning." He had many things He might have said to them; but He charged them here with one thing. They

had refused to accept the facts: the evident fact of His divine

nature, as supported by the further fact of His perfect harmony with the Father in point of teachings, ministry, and personal life. But this refusal to accept facts arose from the deeper fact that they had nothing in common with the Son of God. This essential difference was destined rapidly to become more obvious to those who could and would see, through the exaltation of Christ in and by His Death, a fact toward which the evil hearts of His enemies were already directing their sin-blind efforts.⁹

4. *Plainer Talk on Spiritual Bondage and Freedom.* In response to His words, "many believed on Him." Turning to them,

Spiritual Bondage and Spiritual Freedom
John 8:31-59

Jesus said, "If ye abide in My word, then are ye truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." These words aroused again the contentious spirit of His enemies, in answer to whom He

spoke very plainly concerning the nature and conditions of spiritual bondage and spiritual freedom, and the status of His enemies with reference to these important things. His general theme was the inseparableness of such freedom from truth, faith, and discipleship. Their lack of such freedom He attributed to the following causes.

They depended upon a merely formal relation with Abraham, which He held to be entirely unavailing for spiritual results.

1. Fruitlessness of Their Formal Relation to Abraham
John 8:33-40

They had resented His suggestion of bondage; for, said they, "We be Abraham's seed, and have never yet been in bondage to any man: how sayest Thou, 'Ye shall be made free?'" For this formal relation, they claimed a superior right to recognition and spiritual favor. But Christ pointed them to the greater bondage of sin resting upon them, from which the Son of God alone could set them free. He denied any value to their claim of divine favor because of their descending from Abraham, because their opposition to the Son of God contradicted the faith and life of Abraham. Speaking of their natural lineage, Jesus said, "I know that ye are Abraham's seed; yet," He continued, "ye seek to kill Me, because My word hath not free course in you. . . . If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill Me; a man that hath told you the truth, which I heard from God: this did not Abraham." Spiritually, therefore, they had no

⁹It seems clear that John, in his account of this discourse of Jesus, has given only the outlines of the Lord's analysis and discussion. There is no wonder, therefore, that "as He spake these things, many believed on Him."

kinship with Abraham, and no claim upon God from that point of view.

But they were true to their real lineage of evil. When Jesus asserted that "Ye do the works of your father," they began to see the clear drift of His meaning, and claimed at once to have "one Father, even God." But Jesus contradicted this claim in very pointed language: "If God were your Father, ye would love Me: for I came forth and am come from God. . . . Why do ye not understand My speech? Even because ye cannot hear My word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning . . . there is no truth in him."

This last statement served to introduce the Lord's present tangible proof of their moral bondage to sin and Satan. The proof lay in this circumstance: they could not convict Him of sin; and yet they stubbornly refused to believe His word. The reason for this hardened attitude lay in their evil natures, which Christ affirmed to be isolated from kinship with God. "He that is of God heareth the words of God: for this cause ye hear them not, because ye are not of God."

There is this interesting thing always about Christ's analysis of men. They immediately show themselves to be what He had said they were. This general rule held true in this instance. The enemies of Jesus began at once to show how deep they were in bondage to error and evil thinking. Resorting to a very mean type of race prejudice in the hope of securing popular support, they charged the Son of God with being a Samaritan and having a devil. When Jesus calmly pointed out their error, and correctly defined His divine origin and mission as Savior, His enemies failed to get any true meaning out of His suggestion of spiritual salvation.

Instead, they put a purely physical interpretation on His words, charging Him more strongly with having a devil, and demanding wherein He presumed to be greater than Abraham, and the prophets, all of whom were dead. The reply of Jesus contains three points of extraordinary interest. First, He showed His true nature in the divine modesty and loyalty with which He gave His Father the glory for His own nature and mission as Savior. Second, He exhibited a divine firmness in standing of necessity by the truth: namely, that He was God, and that the denial of

**2. Faithfulness to
Their Father the
Devil**
John 8:41-47

**3. Bondage to
Error and Evil**
John 8:48-59

this fact would make Him, like His enemies, a child of the Devil. Third, He affirmed His consequent superiority over Abraham, since Jesus Christ was the Son of God from all eternity, the One of Promise, seen from afar in the faith of Abraham and of all the prophets.

This suggestion of their father Abraham believing in, and rejoicing in, this Jesus of Nazareth, exasperated the Jews beyond measure. In answer they tried to ridicule this suggestion of the Lord, giving again a purely physical interpretation to His words. With great scorn they said, "Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast Thou seen Abraham?"¹⁰ But with the calm emphasis of a mild oath Jesus turned their minds again to the spiritual fact of His own eternal Sonship. "Verily, verily, I say unto you," He said, "Before Abraham was, I AM." But when Jesus thus identified Himself with the God of their fathers, and that, too, at the most sacred, most cherished, and most obligatory moment of all God's goodness to ancient Israel,¹¹ His words, awful to His enemies, threw them into a fighting rage. At once they took up stones to cast at Him. But He hid himself, and went out of the Temple.

Thus the scene broke up, with the mob spirit in those who were, in willful blindness, hurrying events toward the Cross.

¹⁰Some have thought that this use of the words "fifty years old" as applied to Jesus suggests what must have been His care-worn appearance at that time. This may be true; but it is quite sufficient to take this other view of the case. The Jews wanted to use a "round number," and yet one that would be a safe maximum. Jesus was above thirty. Hence they went beyond forty to the next safe round number, which was fifty.

¹¹Twice before in this discourse Jesus has used these words "I AM," one time pointing to the fact of His divine origin and nature (*John* 7:28; and 8:28); and again to the acceptance of that fact as the indispensable condition of life (*John* 8:24). Here in this last use of the words (*John* 8:58), the reference was an explicit identification of Himself with the God Who delivered Israel from the bondage of Egypt (*Exodus* 3:7-15). This deliverance was the basis of an everlasting obligation upon that people to serve God in faithfulness (*Exodus* 20:2; *Deuteronomy* 6:12-25, etc.). By thus identifying Himself, through His divine nature, with the God Who delivered Israel from bondage, Jesus was challenging the Jews of His day, in the name of that basic obligation upon them as a people, to accept Him as the Son of God and Savior of their souls.

CHAPTER XV

THE CONFLICT CENTRALIZING AT JERUSALEM

"Every day they wrest my words: all their thoughts are against Me for evil. They gather themselves together, they hide themselves, they mark My steps, when they wait for My soul."
Psalms 56:5-6.

"Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and who-soever among you feareth God, to you is the Word of Salvation sent. For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew Him not, nor yet the voices of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath Day, they have fulfilled them in condemning Him." *Acts 13:26-27.*

"Jesus of Nazareth, . . . approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, . . . as ye yourselves also know: Him . . . ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." *Acts 2:22-23.*

During the events reviewed in the last chapter, the Lord Jesus, while completing His last preaching tour in Galilee, turned His thought definitely toward His atoning Death on the Cross at Jerusalem. Leaving Galilee, at the beginning of this chapter, He went southward into the Provinces of Judea and Perea; and henceforth He made Jerusalem His working center until the time of His Death in that City.

However, the Lord Jesus did not go directly to the Cross when He left Galilee. Between His departure from that country and the beginning of the Passion Week, there was a considerable lapse of time, and enough events to occupy this chapter and the next two that follow.

This chapter deals with transitional events, in which the Lord Jesus, moving southward, had such success and popularity as to cause more definite activity on the part of His enemies. The next chapter will show how the Son of God made a last great effort to save the Jews, both the people and their rulers, from their errors and sins of unbelief. In the second chapter after this one, Christ will be seen to withdraw from Jerusalem to the quiet regions of Ephraim, where He made His final summary of the Gospel of Life and Service, before returning to the Capital City at the beginning of the Passion Week.

The present chapter will analyze the early transitional events of this interval under two main topics: the progressing Kingdom and Power of Christ, and the increasing hostilities of His enemies, which tend now to centralize at Jerusalem.

I. The Continued Success of Christ's Work

The Lord Jesus left Galilee, and went toward Jerusalem, the stronghold and working center of His enemies. This movement on His part aroused the deeper antagonism of His enemies, and caused them to formulate a more definite and determined plan of opposition.¹ But the Lord Himself went forward with His work, having success therein similar to that which had attended His labours in Galilee. There was a steady progress of His Kingdom wherever He ministered and taught in these provinces of the South. There was also a quiet persistence of His own Divine Nature and Personal Power as He came into contact with new groups of the people.

1. The Progress of Christ's Kingdom in the South. The progress of Christ's Kingdom, little hindered by His enemies, is set forth, on a large scale, in the two events now to be considered.

The first of these events was the geographical transfer of Christ's working center, from the remote Province of Galilee, to

**1. Christ's Shifting
of His Activities
to Jerusalem**
Matthew 19:1-2
and 8:18-22
Mark 10:1
Luke 9:51-62

Jerusalem, the ecclesiastical stronghold of the scribes and the Pharisees. The leaders of the Jews had striven hard, in Galilee, to crush both Christ and His work. But their failure there was inevitable; for they were fighting against the Son of God, Who had the truth and the power of God on His side.

Jesus, therefore, left Galilee in triumph. He had done His work. He had also defended it against the attacks of His enemies. His going up to Jerusalem at this time partook somewhat of the nature of an aggressive invasion of His enemies' country; yet Christ did not directly invite the inevitable conflict. As was His custom, He moved among men essentially as their Savior, meeting the conflict when it came. His purpose, as the following incidents clearly show, was to win those who would be won to the truth and to saving faith.

Christ was passing through Samaria when the first of these incidents took place. Desiring to make the

**(1) Christ's Liberal
Attitude toward
Men**
Luke 9:51-56

most of His brief time while passing through that country, Jesus had sent messengers ahead to prepare the villages en route for His coming. The situation that arose under

this plan serves to show the liberal attitude of the Lord Jesus

¹The Son of God, with His divine knowledge, foresaw the Cross before His enemies had agreed upon their program of persecution in its extreme tragic details.

toward the uninformed and the misguided people of that day,—a truth which has its perpetual application.

The people of a certain village in Samaria, seeing that Jesus intended to pass hurriedly through their community, were peeved at the Lord's haste, and refused to receive Him at all. This inhospitable response was more than some of the Apostles could witness with full restraint. James and John, seeing what was done, were deeply indignant, and showed their character as "sons of thunder" in their response to this unexpected situation. They desired at once to call down fire from Heaven upon the inhospitable villagers to consume them.

But two things saved this situation, and made of it one of the finest in all the Gospel records. The first was the fact that James and John, even in their wrath, submitted themselves completely to the will and guidance of their Lord. The second was Christ's own exhibition of characteristic divine compassion on this occasion. With kindly decision He corrected the wrong attitude of the Apostles, rebuking their misguided thought of judgment. Then quietly and compassionately He left the misguided villagers, without a word to separate them more widely from Himself. Doubtless the Lord was at this time laying the foundation for that larger program of His Kingdom, discussed in the last chapter of this book, wherein the effective word of truth should reach out from Jerusalem through Judea and Samaria unto the uttermost parts of the earth.

Christ desired to win men, but only to win them aright. He would not cause men to sin against their own souls by provoking them to deeper antagonism toward Himself, except where antagonism arose from designing opposition to the truth. With equal decisiveness Christ refused to allow men to sin against themselves by attempting to follow Him in the wrong spirit. He had but one adequate standard of discipleship: that was the complete dedication of life from motives of love and service. He defended men against the self-wrong in other and lower standards. He spoke plain words to those who desired to modify His own true standard.

Incidents emphasizing this true standard of discipleship occurred while Jesus, with the Apostles, passed on His way through Samaria. As they went in the way, a certain man voluntarily offered to follow Jesus whithersoever He might go. But Jesus would have that man know that there was no earthly end to that

(2) Christ's
Standard of
Discipleship
Matthew 8:18-22
Luke 9:57-62

journey. Deep in the man's heart, the Lord saw a lurking motive of material gain. The Lord ruled out a discipleship that arose from such a motive. Then Jesus called another man, saying to him, "Follow Me." But this man, because he desired to put other minor responsibilities first, was rebuked of the Lord. Then a third man came, desiring to bargain with the Lord on condition that he might first go home and bid farewell to those at his house. But Jesus, in answer to this and the previous suggestions, stated emphatically that nothing, not even a responsibility to the dead or the living, should condition the absoluteness of a man's devotion to the Lord Jesus, and to the work of His Kingdom.

With this kindly attitude, and with this definite and high-minded dealing with men, Jesus journeyed, in His own work, from Galilee into the southern provinces of Judea and Perea. But He did more. He inaugurated in that territory a new campaign for the advancement of His Kingdom. The opposition of the scribes and Pharisees to His Kingdom in Galilee had been of little effect. The triumphant strength of the Lord Jesus is seen in His plan at this time. He called to Himself seventy of His disciples, and sent them forth to preach the Gospel of His Kingdom.

2. Seventy Missionaries Sent to Preach the Kingdom of Christ
Matthew 11:20-30
Luke 10:1-24

from Galilee into the southern provinces of Judea and Perea. But He did more. He inaugurated in that territory a new campaign for the advancement of His Kingdom. The opposition of the scribes and Pharisees to His Kingdom in Galilee had been of little effect. The triumphant strength of the Lord

Christ called the Seventy, and commissioned them, as He had done with the Twelve Apostles in an earlier instance.² These matters on the two occasions are so much alike that extended analysis here is unnecessary. In both instances there

(1) Commission of the Seventy
Luke 10:1-11

a. Mission Like That of the Twelve

was the initial survey by the Master of a mission field fully ripe for the harvest, and a similar call to prayer. The manner of calling the Seventy, and the instructions given to them, both for their journey and for their work, are in most particulars identical with those given previously to the Twelve Apostles.

There are, however, a few points of difference between the Mission of the Seventy and that of the Twelve. The first point is the absence, in the case of the Seventy, of any miraculous power given to them; although, from the subsequent report of their work, as noted below, these missionaries seem to have exercised some measure of extraordinary power.

b. Mission Contrasted with That of the Twelve

²See Chapter XIII, pages 301-308.

A second point of difference between the two missions was that of the purposes for which they were appointed. The Twelve had been sent throughout Galilee to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom, and to get training for themselves from that experience. The Seventy were "sent . . . two and two before His face into every city and place, whither He Himself was about to come." They were heralds of the Gospel, appointed to the particular work of preparing the several communities for a right reception of the Lord Jesus when He should come into their midst. Perhaps there was also a precautionary purpose in this mission, since Jesus was in the country of His enemies.

The third point of contrast between this mission and that of the Twelve was the addition here of the series of local judgments with which Christ closed His commission of the Seventy. "Then He began to upbraid the cities wherein most of His mighty works were done, because they repented not. 'Woe unto thee, Chorazin! Woe unto thee, Bethsaida! . . . And thou, Capernaum, shalt thou be exalted unto Heaven? Thou shalt go down unto Hell! for if the mighty works had been done in Sodom which were done in thee, it would have remained until this day!'"

Local Judgments
Matthew 11:20-24
Luke 10:12-16

There was in these words, first, a touch of divine disappointment at the spiritual apathy of these cities where Jesus had done His mightiest works and made His strongest appeals. But there is no suggestion here that this want of satisfying results was due to the opposing activities of Christ's enemies. The thought of Christ pointed to the heart of the people. Many had believed on Him. The gains in themselves had been great. Yet there was enough spiritual deadness and indifference in those cities to call forth these judgments of the Lord upon the communities in which He had laboured so long.

These local judgments were full of solemn significance. Christ's words were neither presumptive nor figurative. Those cities had literally been exalted to the Heavens, because the Son of God had lived, and ministered, and taught in their midst. Their lack of response would seem incredible, but for the fact. Even the pagan cities of Tyre and Sidon "would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes!" And yet these Jews, the ancient people of God, had been unresponsive to His Son! Even proverbially wicked Sodom would have rescued herself by repentance. Yet Capernaum, where the Lord had dwelled, held out in sin! The judgments were terrible; for those communities had sinned

against the Light of Life, and had chosen darkness because they loved evil.

Furthermore, in all the circumstances of these judgments, there is an almost fearful emphasis upon this truth: that all hopes of divine favor in life are identified with the Kingdom and the Kingship of Jesus Christ. Those cities were the more accursed because they had heard *Him*, and yet had not responded. The details of the situation are impressive. There were the sinful and unrepenting cities. In the midst of them appeared the throne of divine judgment and mercy, the Son of God, the Kingdom of Christ, and the Gospel and messengers of Hope. And all of these things, as Christ there proclaimed, are inseparable in God's offers of mercy and life to men. There is no other way of hope. "He that heareth you heareth Me," said the Lord Jesus; "and he that rejecteth you rejecteth Me; and he that rejecteth Me rejecteth Him that sent Me." The situation was typical. The truth was universal. Christ was speaking to all individuals in all places. Repentance and faith alone can satisfy the Lord.

The results of this mission of the Seventy are full of interest. The gains made to the Kingdom through the responses of the people have not been recorded. However, the subsequent prayer of Jesus would seem to suggest that the mission was successful in this respect. There were other important results which have been recorded.

(2) Results of the Mission of the Seventy

First among these results, was the report of the Seventy. They returned to Jesus, rejoicing that "the devils were subject unto us in Thy Name." To Christ these facts suggested at once the ultimate judgment which rests upon Satan, and upon his Kingdom of Darkness in the world. They suggested also the triumphing power, and the inviolable character, which belong to them who are identified with Christ's onward marching Kingdom of Truth and Righteousness.

But even here Christ was careful that men should make no mistake. The deepest cause of gratitude is not in the external things that are done, but in the underlying conditions which enable men to do those things. It was a great thing that these Seventy missionaries had exercised power over the devils. But it was infinitely more a thing to be thankful for that the relations of these Seventy were right with God, and that their "names were written in Heaven." When that condition is true, the

**a. Report of the Seventy
Luke 10:17-20**

results, such as are here made the occasion of rejoicing, follow in some form in every life.

It was this deeper thought of life as rightly related to God that moved the Lord Jesus to pray the following prayer of thanksgiving to His Father in Heaven. "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, that Thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes: yea, Father; for so it was well-pleasing in Thy sight. All things have been delivered unto Me of My Father: and no one knoweth who the Son is save the Father; and who the Father is, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him."

b. Christ's Prayer of Thanksgiving
Matthew 11:25-27
Luke 10:21-22

It was likewise the reflex of this truth, as wrought out in the lives of His faithful servants, which moved the heart of Jesus, with that gratitude and appreciation in which He never failed, to bestow upon the Seventy missionaries the following benediction. "Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see: for I say unto you, that many prophets and kings desired to see the things which ye see, and saw them not; and to hear the things which ye hear, and heard them not."

c. Benediction on the Seventy
Luke 10:23-24

Finally, it was the thought of what this deeper heart-relation with Him, and through Him with His Father, would mean to all the world which caused Christ at this moment to issue that universal invitation which has been an inexhaustible source of comfort to His people in all ages. "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light."

d. Universal Invitation to Experience, Knowledge, and Rest
Matthew 11:28-30

Looking back over these results as a whole, one may see the real result of such work as that which the Seventy had done. The heart of Jesus, and the messengers of His Kingdom, and the lives that respond to the call of the Gospel, all are united in the bonds of eternal life and love and gladness.³

2. *Persistence of Christ's Power and Personality.* The progress of Christ's Kingdom in Judea and Perea was further evinced by the persistence of His divine power and personality. The opposition of His enemies had been of little avail against His

³Compare John 17:6-26.

Kingdom. His work went on almost as if nothing adverse had happened during His long ministry in Galilee. This progress of His Kingdom was measured, in part at least, by the popular recognition accorded Him in those southern provinces, and by the extension of His own personal ministry in that new territory.

The people recognized Him as the Lord Jesus Christ, their Savior. There were two exhibitions at this time of this right

1. Personal Responses to the Lord Jesus Christ response to the Divine Personality of the Lord Jesus. The first of these exalted the teaching authority of the Son of God. The other was a direct recognition and exaltation of His Divine Nature. In both of them together, there was an expression of Christ's ideal of a full-orbed Christian life: that is, a life of love, expressing itself in active service to the world and in devout worship of God.

The authority of Christ as a Teacher forced itself into recognition by a certain lawyer of the Pharisees. The acknowledgment was the more effective because this

(1) Acknowledgment of Christ's Teaching Authority
Luke 10:25-37

Pharisee was at first unfriendly toward Jesus. This lawyer asked two questions. The truths uttered by the Lord in His replies were of such force as to compel this lawyer to agree on two points, the one involving the basic ideal of right living, and the other the practical expression of that ideal in active service.

The two questions were thus asked and answered. While Jesus was teaching, a certain lawyer came to Him with this test question: "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" This inquiry Jesus answered

a. Love the Law of Life
Luke 10:25-28
Deut. 6:4-5
Leviticus 19:18

with a teaching question: "What is written in the law? How readest thou?" In reply, the lawyer quoted, with approval, the ancient law of love, as given by Moses: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." To this statement of the law Christ gave His full approval, saying, "Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live."

There are three things in these questions and answers which should receive careful attention. The first is that this lawyer did not have in his own heart that essential love about which he was speaking so glibly in terms of the law. Hence Jesus, Who knew this absence of love, insisted upon the man's *doing this law* as a

condition of life. Doing likewise, as Jesus required, involved a change of nature in the Pharisee. The condition imposed by the Lord meant first *to be*, and then *to do*. The test thus prescribed by the Lord was exactly to the point.

Again, in this exalted ideal of law life is conceived to be love: perfect life is perfect love. Christ agreed here that the two things were identical. The man who was loving to the full extent of this law would be alive in the highest and divinest sense of which, even theoretically, human life was capable.

Finally, there are two ideals of love required in this instance, as thus far considered. There is the ideal of complete devotion to God. This ideal is rightly expressed in worship, which uplifts the soul to God, and opens the channels of saving grace into the soul. The other ideal is that of service: that which takes the life thus blessed of God and makes it a blessing to others. This is again the *intake* and the *outlet* of salvation and the saved life, as Christ fully defined the way of life above in Chapter IV. Christ was therefore entirely consistent with His former conception of a saved life and its conditions, when He said to the lawyer on this occasion, "This do, and thou shalt live." That condition embraces the full compass of salvation.

Love is the basic law of life. This truth the lawyer admitted. He also felt how deeply Christ's conception of law and love cut into his own unloving life; for even then he extended a heart of malice and incipient murder toward the Lord Jesus. Before the law of love for a neighbor, this lawyer felt himself to be deeply guilty. Hoping therefore to excuse his great guilt, he sought some consoling conception of a neighbor. "And who is my neighbor?" he asked.

But there was no balm for his guilty soul. In answer to his question, Christ gave that story of love-in-action, commonly called the "Parable of the Good Samaritan." That part of the law of love means sympathy translated into service. It means to accept the responsibility of thinking and doing good, and not evil, wherever there is opportunity. It means to love without failure. This conception of the law the lawyer was compelled, by the very force of the truth, to accept. The instruction was therefore complete when Christ said to the lawyer, "Go, and do thou likewise."³

³This Parable has its great positive force as a permanent and universal example of what love should be and do. That was, in fact, the power of the Parable as then spoken. The immediate purpose, however, was to answer this Pharisee's cunning attack upon the Son of God. But Jesus, instead of being trapped by these wily questions, so used them as to compel self-judgment upon the unloving Pharisee,

That was the true way to carry the law of love into effective living. Even the enemies of Christ were compelled to acknowledge His authority as a Teacher of the truth.

**(2) Acknowledgement of Christ's Divine Personality
Luke 10:38-42**

But the full response to the Divine Personality of the Son of God was to be expected only from some devout friend of the Lord. The upward look of love is worship; and it was the privilege of Mary, in her act of pure devotion to Jesus, to furnish such an expression of worshipping love as would be ideal for all time.

This incident of pure devotion followed immediately after Christ's conversation with the unloving Pharisee. There was a sharp contrast, evidently intended, between the two events. Here Mary sat at the feet of Jesus, worshipping Him with pure devotion. The superior quality of her love is further enhanced by the additional contrast between Mary and Martha on this occasion. The latter was "anxious and troubled about many things." Both loved the Lord Jesus, and both were trying to honor Him. Martha was trying to serve Him by the external *ministry of things*. In her anxiety for an active love, she was forgetful that "God is not worshipped with men's hands as though He needed anything." Mary chose to sit at the Lord's feet, in humble adoration and spiritual communion with Him. That was her highest service to her Divine Lord and Savior.

This exhibition of love supplements that of the previous incident. Martha's devotion is like that of the Good Samaritan. It was excellent in its kind; but it failed to fit properly into this situation. Had her love been going out toward people in their needs, whom she could serve, then her activity would have been the superior type of expression. But in the matter of serving the Lord directly, Mary's pure devotion, her adoring spiritual communion with the Son of God, was the proper, and therefore the higher, expression of love to Him on this occasion. It was the love that exalts the Lord, and lifts the soul up into Christ likeness.

**Service vs.
Worship**

The power of Christ persisted also in and through the extension of His personal ministry in the southern provinces. He was active and effective in His healing mercies. He was equally so in His public teaching, which at this time centered in Himself as the only Savior of the world. In surveying

2. Personal Ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ

the recorded events considered below, it is instructive to note, first, how little the previous opposition to Jesus had influenced His own work, and further, how perfectly His own divine ministry exemplified the ideal of love which He had held up before the world in the Parable of the Good Samaritan.

Jesus, at this time, was probably near Jerusalem. "As He passed by (a certain place), He saw a man blind from his birth."

(1) Healing Ministry: the Man Born Blind
John 9:1-41

From Christ's statements about this man, it is evident that the Lord regarded this affliction as affording Him a double opportunity, first for sympathetic ministry, and further for exhibiting Himself again as the Light and Life of the World. As will appear in the following study, there are three main centers of interest in the story of this healing of the man born blind.

The facts of the healing are the first center of interest. The man was born blind. This calamity was then thought to have arisen from some sin in the man, or in his parents. This cause of the calamity Jesus denied, saying that this was a situation wherein the works of God might be made manifest in an individual. After this explanation, Jesus, having moistened a bit of clay with saliva, as He had done on a previous occasion,⁴ put it upon the man's eyes, and commanded him to "go, and wash in the Pool of Siloam."⁵ This he did, and was healed. Then there arose a dispute as to the identity of the man, and the method of his healing. These questions were eventually settled by the man himself; but he was unable to show the disputants "the Man that is called Jesus," Who had wrought this healing. Such in outline were the facts.

This was a notable miracle, admitted by all to be true beyond controversy. The people, therefore, perhaps to support their confidence in Jesus, brought this healed man to the Pharisees. After learning from the man the manner of his cure, they responded to the situation in a way that reflected their true spirit at that time.

They saw at once that they could not deny the fact of the cure. To attempt that would have stultified them in the eyes of the

⁴See Chapter XIV, page 328.

⁵Any person who will take the trouble to look into the usual condition of the eyes of those who are blind in that part of the world, will readily see the fitness, on its physical side, of approaching a cure as did the Lord Jesus in this case, in as far as He intended the physical means used to be suggestive.

people. But the fact that Jesus had healed this man on the Sabbath Day gave His enemies a basis for their opposition. True to their old method in Galilee, they tried again to discredit Jesus as an evil man because He had done this thing on the sacred day. "This Man is not from God," they said, "because He keepeth not the Sabbath." But some common sense persons present, who were perhaps believers in Christ, knocked the heart out of that charge with these words: "How can a man that is a sinner do such signs?"

But the Jews, seeing the division that arose among the people, and refusing to be convinced, or to be put to silence, turned upon the man himself who had been healed.

"What sayest thou of Him, in that He opened thine eyes?" This they asked, by way of centering their attack upon the one man most assailable in the group, as they thought.

"He is a Prophet," replied the healed man, with a promptness of conviction and courage that must have surprised his angry opponents.

Not seeing how to refute this direct testimony, the Jewish leaders next undertook to discredit the witness himself, by denying the fact of his cure. Hoping to succeed in this effort, they called for the man's parents, and held with them such conversation as showed how completely the leaders of the Jews had been bullying and terrorizing the common people to prevent them from accepting the Lord Jesus. These parents, even when summoned as witnesses, feared to state the simple facts, lest, for their supposed attitude of sympathy toward Jesus, they should be cast out of the synagogue.

Failing, therefore, to get anything of value to their cause from the parents, the tyrannical Jews turned again to the healed man himself.

"Give glory to God: we know that this man is a sinner," they said, with hypocritical sanctity, and with an effort to co-erce their witness by impressing him with a solemn sense of their own authority.

"Whether He be a sinner," the man replied, with continued firmness of conviction, "I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." For him, that fact was enough for conviction and confidence, without further argument.

"What did He to thee?" they asked further, in a cunning effort to entrap and discredit this witness. "How opened He thine eyes?"

By this time the healed man had realized the insincerity of his

questioners, and the uselessness of further parley with them. Hence he replied, "I told you even now, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? Would ye also become His disciples?"

This ironic thrust pierced the hearts of his enemies, and stung them into exasperation. Reviling the man, they set him, as a disciple of Christ, in contrast with themselves, as disciples of Moses. "We know that God hath spoken unto Moses," they said: "but as for this Man, we know not whence He is."

Heroically ridiculing their pretense of superior sanctity and superior authority in spiritual matters, this healed man made the following defence of the Lord Jesus Christ:

"Why, herein is the marvel, that ye know not whence He is, and yet He opened mine eyes. We know that God heareth not sinners: but if this Man be a worshipper of God, and do His will, Him He heareth. Since the world began it was never heard that any one opened the eyes of a man born blind. If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing."

That argument was conclusive, and the Jews knew it. But they were not there to accept the truth. Being unable to handle the situation otherwise, they resorted at last to personal abuse, and to tyranny outright. They berated the man as an impudent sinner, and as full of presumption in his attempts to teach them. Then they cast him out of their synagogue.⁶

Contrasted with all of this tyrannical abuse and cruelty, perpetrated in the name of religion, was the quiet sympathy of Jesus when He heard how the Jews had treated this man. Having sought and found the man, after he was cast out of the synagogue, Jesus encouraged his faith with this question: "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?"

c. Christ's Sympathetic Ministry to the Outcast Man
John 9:35-41

⁶The underlying arguments of this entire incident are full of interest. The leaders of the Jews, because Christ had healed on the Sabbath Day, concluded that "that Man is not from God." In the position thus taken by them, they first attacked the Nature of Jesus, which, of course, they refused to accept as divine. In supporting this attack, they attempted, in the second place, to apply to Christ's conduct the moral argument, supposing that a Divine Person would not thus violate the Sabbath Day. They failed, however, to recognize (possibly they deliberately ignored) the divine principle of mercy in the Sabbath law. Then too, the fact of healing confronted this misapplied argument. They tried to deny the fact, but were overpowered by the evidence. Finally, they were forced back to the position of flatly rejecting Christ (v. 29), and of arbitrarily denying His divine origin. This position the healed man easily overthrew by a correct application of the moral argument, showing that the miracle was impossible apart from the integrity and true character of the Son of God (30-33). The scene, therefore, closed appropriately with a careful discrimination by Christ between the open minded receptiveness of this healed man and the spiritual blindness of the Pharisees (35-41). This healed man was a person of no mean ability. Can he be identified with any person known in New Testament history?

"And who is He, Lord, that I may believe on Him?" asked this man, who had a mind open and alert for receiving the truth.

Jesus replied, "Thou hast both seen Him, and He it is that speaketh with thee."

Then he said, "Lord, I believe." And having thus come to understand the truth, he worshipped the Son of God.

The Lord Jesus watched the saving effect of truth upon this receptive mind and heart. The effect was like a star amid the surrounding darkness of Pharisaic resistance. Seeing this effect, Jesus generalized upon this re-action of faith as illustrating in a typical way the saving function of truth, which is always conditioned upon the reception it has in the hearts of men. Thus men stand self-judged, in the clear light of faith, or in spiritual darkness, before the Son of God and His Gospel of Life. "For judgment came I into this world," said Christ, commenting on the situation then before Him, "that they which see not may see; and that they which see may become blind."

In these last words Jesus referred again to the common truth of moral and spiritual apperception: that is, to him that hath it shall be given. The Pharisees, as usual, were present, and alert to catch every word of Christ. When they heard this searching truth, and perceived its immediate application to their own barren and evil hearts, they asked if Jesus regarded them as "also blind." Jesus answered them in terms of the contrast between their privilege and their re-actions. If they were really ignorant and teachable, they might, in some measure at least, be excusable. But they were not so. They were arrogantly puffed up with an assumption of knowledge. They were therefore resentful of instruction. He judged them therefore as being inexcusable for their sins.

So the healing ministry of Jesus went on from day to day. No less effective was the progress of His teaching ministry at this time. This progress is seen both in the fact that He continued to teach, and in the pronounced authority with which He taught. More definitely than He had previously done, He insisted upon the truth of His Own exclusive Saviorship. That there is no other

**(2) Teaching
Ministry. Christ's
Exclusive Savior-
ship
John 10:1-21**

Savior, and no other way of life than that which comes through Jesus Christ, was the central truth which He emphasized in His extended discussion of Himself as the Good Shepherd.

This discourse followed immediately upon the healing of the man born blind, and is in part an outgrowth of that incident.

Here Christ set forth the fact, first, that God's plan is to save the world in a definite way. There is the fold of God's people; and there is the One Shepherd to care for them. All others are thieves and robbers. That true Shepherd has full authority over the fold and the sheep. That authority is recognized by the porter. Between the Shepherd and the sheep there is a working familiarity and confidence. He leads them forth to the pastures. He cares for them. They trust Him. He is the Source and the Way of Life to them.

These things Jesus spoke, meaning that He is the One Shepherd and Savior of God's people. He was sent to save them, to protect them, and to nourish them. He alone is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life." The thieves and the robbers were the false shepherds, the false teachers, who would mislead the souls of men: the scribes and Pharisees then, and all others since, who would try to find some other way into the Kingdom of God than that of coming into the Kingdom through faith in the Son of God. Christ's forceful meaning, in the light of the completed revelation, is now clear; but His words then were not fully understood.⁷

Seeing that His words were not well understood, Jesus explained His meaning more literally. "I am the Door of the Sheep," He said. "All that came before Me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the Door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and go out, and shall find pasture." Thus Christ again proclaimed Himself to be the only Savior, and to be so recognized by His own followers, who had come into a knowledge of the truth. He was unlike all those who offer salvation in some other way. He alone had an unselfish mission *to give life*. All others, unlawfully, sought their own concerns. Some of them, like cowardly hirelings, who seek only their own interest, would forsake the flock when it was in the greatest need. Pretenders neither save, nor provide, nor protect. But Christ, the Good Shepherd, was sent to give life, abundant life, and care-

⁷These words of Jesus were applicable to the Pharisees as a direct answer to their contentions before the blind man whom Jesus had healed. There they had said, "Thou art His disciple; but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God hath spoken unto Moses; but as for this Man, we know not whence He is." That is, they claimed to be certainly and exclusively the people of God. But herein Jesus asserted, exactly opposite to their claims, that they had no right and legal connections at all with the Kingdom of God.

ful protection, to those who put themselves under His Divine care.

Three thoughts of ultimate triumph rose in the Lord's mind while He was thus contrasting Himself with those who, as wolves, or thieves, or hirelings, were trying to destroy His own work of Divine and saving grace in the hearts of men. These thoughts sprang from His consciousness of Himself and His heavenly commission as the Divine and only Savior of the world.

**c. Three Thoughts
of Ultimate Tri-
umph by Christ
John 10:14-18**

Christ thought first of the security of His own ultimate recognition, as opposed to all that pretend to Saviorships. Deep in His divine consciousness was this assurance: "I am the Good Shepherd; and I know mine own, and mine own know Me, even as the Father knoweth Me, and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep." He never feared the results of experience. His destined recognition was the work of the Spirit in the realm of the spirit. In that exalted triangle—the Father, the Son, and His followers, with the Spirit to empower the truth for conviction—the ultimate recognition of Christ was assured.

Again, Christ thought of the destiny of His Kingdom, the magnitude and the privilege of His shepherding the Fold of God. He saw His work as Savior, not as destroyed by His enemies, but as going forward unto world-wide blessedness. He looked already into the future, beyond His Death and Exaltation, upon the ingatherings that should result from those extensive programs which He outlined for His Kingdom during His last scenes with the Apostles before His Ascension. He foresaw the Gentile world also in the fold of the Lord. "And other sheep I have," He said, "which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and they shall become one flock, and one Shepherd."

Finally, He thought of the price of this triumph of His own Saviorship. That price was His own Death. But that death was not the triumph of His enemies. His own power and authority, in death as in life, was absolute. His enemies could do nothing, except in so far as He willed to surrender Himself into their hands and their power. Every step toward death was taken of His own accord. His glory as the Good Shepherd was that He laid down His life for His sheep. "Thereforth doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I may take it again. No one taketh it away from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.

This commandment receive I from My Father." Christ paid the price of triumph; but He paid it in a voluntary death. And the consciousness of that absolute divine power which enabled Him so to lay down His life was at this time the positive assurance of His triumph in the ultimate purposes of His Father in sending His Son to save the world.⁸

These were high and sacred thoughts. To the divine consciousness and foreseeing mind of Jesus, they were very clear.

d. Results: a Division among the People
John 10:19-21

To the spiritually minded among men, these words were a source of inspiration and confidence. To all others, these words had no exalting meaning, but rather carried the suggestion of blasphemy. There was therefore a division among the people concerning the Lord Jesus.

Many of them said, "He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye Him?" But many others defended their faith in Christ, by again applying to His teachings the moral argument, and supporting their position by renewed reference to His work of healing. They took the strong ground that "these are not the sayings of one possessed with a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?" they asked. They saw in Christ's words, and in His deeds, the positive evidence of His Divine Saviorship; and they continued to believe in Him, despite the growing opposition of His enemies.

II. Conflict, with a Crystalizing Conclusion

The scribes and the Pharisees, who opposed the work of Christ in Galilee, had followed Him, with watchful eyes, during His deliberate progress from Galilee into the southern provinces, and toward the city of Jerusalem. They doubtless chafed at seeing the popularity of Jesus in this journey. They probably promoted those divisions among the people which were sometimes consequent upon His teaching. They waited, with impatient restraint, for an opportunity when they could again come forth into open opposition to the Person and the work of the Lord Jesus. When the opportunity came, as it soon did come, they renewed the open conflict, in two hostile approaches to Jesus, with results that pointed, through the charge of blasphemy and a resorting to force, directly toward the Cross.

⁸On the exercise of Christ's absolute power at the time of His Death, see Chapters XX—XXV.

1. *A Renewed Attack upon the Divine Nature of Jesus Christ.* The first of these hostile approaches, although it began as a direct inquiry about His Messiahship, developed into an attack upon the Divine Nature of the Lord Jesus. The inner spirit and purpose of this approach is revealed in the end, rather than in the beginning, of this situation.

**Christ Questioned
—Consequences**
John 10:22-42
Luke 11:1-13

The place was Jerusalem. Jesus had at last reached the Sacred City. It was winter, probably the latter part of December, as time is now counted. The occasion was the Feast of Dedication, which lasted for eight days, and was a time of great patriotic enthusiasm.⁹ The Temple, and many other places throughout the land, were illuminated

**1. Setting and
Motive of the
Question Asked**
John 10:22-25

with candles. Public mourning and all fasting were prohibited. Everything Jewish was brought to the front. Thoughts of nationalism, of the Messiah, and (at this time) of deliverance from the Roman yoke, would naturally be uppermost in every mind and heart.

It was during this prolonged and intensive expression of nationalism that Jesus was in Jerusalem. On one of the feast days, while He was walking in the Temple, in Solomon's Porch, a deputation of Jews came to Him with this question: "How long dost Thou hold us in suspense? If Thou art the Christ, tell us plainly."

Why was that question asked? Possibly those who asked the question, amid the complex enthusiasm of the occasion, had turned naturally to Christ with a sincere desire to know whether He was their true Messiah. That is possible. But there is greater likelihood that the enemies of Christ had a sinister hand in this inquiry. They may have hypocritically asked the question themselves. It is more likely that they prompted the people to urge this question, hoping, through the crowd-psychology of the

⁹The Feast of Dedication was an occasion of rejoicing, strongly nationalistic and patriotic in thought and feeling. It was inaugurated to commemorate the reconsecration of the Temple by Judas Maccabeus after it had been grossly profaned by Antiochus Epiphanes. (See *1. Maccabees* 1:20-60; and 4:36-57). The Feast was an annual affair, held on the 25th of Chisleu, which would fix the date of this particular Feast on the 19th of December, about four months before the Crucifixion. This celebration, because of the extensive use of illumination, was called also the Feast of Lights. One characteristic feature of the occasion, it is said, was the increasing of the number of lights on the Temple night by night to signify the restoration of that sacred building. The origin of this feast has been recorded in *1. Maccabees* 4; *2. Maccabees* 10; and by Josephus (*Ant.*, xii. 7. 7). Nowhere else is this feast mentioned in the New Testament. There is little doubt that the patriotic fervor of this occasion, perhaps considered in advance, had some connection with the staging of this particular question to the Lord Jesus at this time.

occasion, to start some movement which they might interpret to the detriment of Jesus, pretending that He was leading a revolt against the Roman Government. Whatever their purposes, the enemies of Christ were present, and active, as shown in subsequent events. Christ was aware of their presence; and, from the first, in His reply, He seems to have acted upon His divine knowledge of an evil intent lurking somewhere in this question, or back of it.

Christ was their Messiah, but not in the nationalistic sense in which they had asked this question. To have answered *Yes* at that time, doubtless would have given rise to that popular commotion which His enemies had hoped to use against Him. Christ was their Messiah because He was the Divine Son of Promise. Their question, when rightly answered, involved a recognition, first of all, of Christ's Divine Nature; for such recognition, as He presently stated, carried with it an understanding of His Messianic function. He therefore tactfully turned His attention and theirs, in His reply, to this deeper consideration involved in a right answer to their question.

The first step in Christ's reply was a direct declaration of His own Divine Nature. He made four points in this declaration.

The first was historical. He pointed out that (1) Christ's Declaration of His Divine Nature He had already told them of His Divinity, and had proved it by His works. The second point was explanatory. They had not believed, as He said, because they lacked spiritual sympathy, and had nothing in common with the Son of God. The third point was Messianic. He affirmed that He was the Savior, and that He was so recognized by those who had accepted Him. They were saved, inseparable from Him, being united to Him by bonds of eternal life that were supported by the purpose and the power of His Father in Heaven. The fourth point was personal, an identification of Himself with His Father: "I and the Father are one."

This direct assertion of His Divinity brought out the hidden motive with which at least some of those present had approached

the Lord on this occasion: for at this point they "took up stones again to stone Him."

a. Hidden Motive Now Revealed But Jesus arrested their violence by challenging them to justify their action, and to

show for what good work from the Father they were about to stone His Son. The Jews showed their full hand in the next

statement. "For a good work," they said, "we stone Thee not, but for blasphemy; and because that Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God."

That moment was one of great historical importance. In it Christ expressly declared to His enemies that He was Divine in Nature. There was then no question about His meaning. His enemies understood Him, and went about to act upon that meaning. "We stone Thee," they said, ". . . . for blasphemy; and because that Thou makest Thyself God." At last their watchful eyes had discovered, as they thought, definite grounds for an accusation. They formally announced, for the first time, that charge of blasphemy for which ultimately they put the Lord Jesus to death.

But the Son of God did not hear this charge of blasphemy without making reply. He made a powerful defence of His Divine Nature, first by defining the question clearly, and then by presenting the tangible proofs of His Divinity. In doing so, He justified the claim He had made, first from the human point of view, and then from the divine.

(2) Christ's Defence of His Divine Nature

John 10:34-38

Christ knew the law of God, and made use of it on this occasion for the first justification of Himself on the human level. To do this, He needed only to cite that ancient law wherein God had said of all men, "Ye are gods."¹⁰ If Christ had been no more than a man, it was possible to justify His previous words under this statement of the law. But that was not the question at issue. Christ was more than man. He was God. Therefore this charge of blasphemy against Him must be answered on the divine level. This distinction He made very clear in the following words: "If He called them gods, unto whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), say ye of Him, Whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'Thou blasphemest'; because I said, 'I am the Son of God?' "

That is, Jesus Christ was the Son of God by origin and by nature, as defined in the First and Second Chapters of this book, and as insisted upon by Himself, and in all the Scriptures bearing upon this question. In origin, He was from His Father in

¹⁰The law quoted here by Christ was taken from *Psalms* 82:6: "I have said, 'Ye are gods; and all of you are the children of the Most High.'"

Heaven. In nature, He was one with His Father. In divine majesty, and power, and authority, He was co-equal with His Father. From all eternity, Christ was with God, and Christ was God. In His words quoted above, He showed His enemies, who were ignorant of their own Scriptures, how He could easily justify Himself against the charge of blasphemy even on the human level; and then He lifted the whole question to the proper divine level, where He could also as easily defend Himself against the same charge.

In justification of this higher claim to Divine Sonship, Christ made a fearless appeal to facts. In support of His Divine Nature, He cited the tangible evidence in His works, with which His enemies were very familiar: **b. Fearless Appeal to the Facts** "If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not. But if I do them, though ye believe not Me, believe the works: that ye may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father." **John 10:37-38**

In these bold words Christ challenged His enemies to find one discordant note in all of His moral and spiritual life. If they could find one point of failure on His part, then He was not divine: and He would have been willing to recognize even that truth, and to desist from His high claims to be the Son of God and the Savior of the world. But the Son of God was never afraid of facts. He invited investigation. The effect of this challenge was not to endanger the integrity of Christ and the strength of His claims, but to drive His enemies legally into a corner. For the moment, Christ separated Himself, as it were, from His works, and allowed His whole claim to rest upon the character and the integrity of what He had done. If His works could not be discredited, then His enemies were under obligations to accept the conclusion of facts. Hence He feared not to say, "Believe the works: that ye may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father." His enemies did what men of such state of mind are likely to do.

Two results followed from the asking and answering of this question, as analyzed above. The one result was the re-action of Christ's enemies. That result was immediate and local. The other result was the subsequent action of Christ. That was more extensive in its nature and scope, involving the transfer of His work, for a time, into the Province of Perea, in the regions beyond the Jordan. **3. Two Results of This Question** **John 10:31, 39-42** **Luke 11:1-13**

Immediately upon hearing these high claims of Jesus, His enemies resorted to force and violence against Him. They resented both the method and the matter of His reply to their question. When He identified Himself with His Father, the record states that they "took up stones *again* to stone Him." Possibly there had already been motions of violence, unrecorded, during this feast. When Jesus returned later to this exalted claim, saying, "the Father is in Me, and I in the Father," "they sought again to take Him: and He went forth out of their hand."¹¹

From the standpoint of willful blindness on the part of Christ's enemies, two workable conclusions have been arrived at by them in this situation. The one was the charge of blasphemy, already described. The other was this readiness to resort to violent measures in order to carry out their own purposes. Here at length had emerged into clear light, from the determined depths of evil in the hearts of Christ's enemies, both the final charge against Him, and the means of executing that charge, which pointed out with certainty the way to the Cross. These conclusions were alike natural to those who had so deliberately closed their eyes to the tangible facts to which the Lord Jesus made His appeal on this occasion.

As a result of this attempted violence, Jesus left Jerusalem for a time. "He went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John was at first baptizing; and there He abode." This movement of the Lord Jesus gave rise to an important period of His Gospel ministry in Perea. Under this topic of the Lord's retirement, a general view of that Perea ministry, and one particular lesson on prayer, will now be considered.

In Perea, Jesus was received with great popular favor. It was in those regions beyond Jordan that John the Baptist had done his great work; and the awakened people came to Jesus at this time in great numbers. Of those who thus came to the Lord, four things are said to their credit, which seem to set them intentionally in contrast with the hostile Jews whom Jesus had lately left at Jerusalem.

**(1) Resort to
Force by
Christ's Enemies**
John 10:31, 39

**(2) Retirement of
Christ: the Gospel
in Perea**
John 10:40-42
Luke 11:1-13

**a. General View
of the Gospel
in Perea**
John 10:40-42

¹¹How did Jesus escape from the violent hands of His enemies at this time? There are at least three possibilities. It may have been by some supernatural physical

These common people in Perea remembered the preparatory work done in their midst by John the Baptist. They remembered what John had said about the Christ sufficiently well to check up, with just appreciation, the teachings of John against the facts of Jesus as He now appeared among them. They recognized the obvious superiority of the Lord Jesus over John, even as John himself had pointed out to them. And many of them there believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. This general view of their attitude toward the Son of God is a high tribute to the open mindedness of the people in that province, and also to the effectiveness of the work done among them by John the Baptist.¹²

These people remembered also that John had taught his disciples to pray—lessons in prayer now regrettably lost. One who was a disciple of Jesus, came to the Lord, representing a larger group of disciples, with this request: "Lord, teach us to pray, even as John also taught his disciples." In answer to this request, Jesus gave them both an example and a working principle of prayer.

**b. Lesson in Prayer,
by Request
Luke 11:1-13**

The example of prayer which Christ gave at this time was similar to that which He had given earlier in the Sermon on the Mount.¹³ There are, however, a few differences, as the text of the Prayer appears in the American Standard Edition of this Gospel. The address is simply "Father," with no qualifying words. The third petition, "Thy will be done, etc," is omitted. So also the last part of the sixth petition is wanting. There is also an omission of the entire ascription of "the kingdom, the power, and the glory," with which the common form of the Lord's Prayer closes. Probably the prayer as actually given was identical with the fuller form, as originally given in the Sermon on the Mount, and recorded by Matthew.¹⁴

change in Himself, similar to those that took place in His resurrection body. But the natural meaning of the saying that "He went forth" seems to preclude that supposition. It may have been by an exercise of His divine power upon His enemies, similar to that exercised over them in the Garden of Gethsemane (Chapter XX, page 519). This may have been done as a final proof of the claims He had made. It may have been by a sudden showing of the awful majesty with which He was clothed as the Son of God, which stayed the violent hands of His enemies.

¹²See Chapter III, pages 64-69, for the work of John the Baptist, as the Forerunner of Christ.

¹³See Chapter IX, pages 198-200.

¹⁴In many of the ancient manuscripts of Luke's Gospel, there is abundant authority, which is fully recognized in the footnotes to this passage in the American Revision of the text, for the inclusion of practically all of the elements mentioned above as omitted from this form of the Lord's Prayer. In the Authorized Version of this Gospel, these ancient manuscript readings have been recognized in the text, making the version of the Prayer as here given almost exactly identical with that given earlier by Matthew.

An interesting variation in this lesson in prayer was the different working principle which Christ emphasized at this time.

(b) Importunity in Prayer
Luke 11:5-13
Cf. Matt. 6:14-15
Matt. 7:7-11

In the Sermon on the Mount, Christ insisted upon sincerity in prayer, as attested by the act of full forgiveness on the part of him who prays. At this time, Christ emphasized the principle of importunity in prayer as effective in securing that for which any one may pray.

The effectiveness of importunity, as a working principle of prayer, Christ urged in three arguments. First, He showed how even a man might be prevailed upon to render a favor, not because of friendship, but because of the persistence with which another person might make his requests.

Three Arguments for Importunity in Prayer

Again, Christ repeated here that basic confidence in prayer which He had insisted upon in the Sermon on the Mount: "Ask . . . Seek . . . Knock; for it shall be given . . . found . . . and opened unto you."¹⁵ Finally, by a series of familiar comparisons, Christ showed that it was not in the nature of love to give a thing that was useless, or dangerous, or harmful. Then, applying this general truth of love, He affirmed that the Father in Heaven, since God is Love, was naturally inclined to answer prayer, and to give even His Holy Spirit to them who ask Him.

2. *A Renewed Attack upon the Legal Conduct of Jesus Christ.*

But these quiet scenes of instruction were soon interrupted. The enemies of Jesus made another attack. This time they attempted to find fault with Him for an infraction of the ceremonial law. This plan of attack, as the reader will remember, was only a revival of a previously unsuccessful effort of the same kind.¹⁶ In this incident of renewed hostility, there are three centers of interest: the plan of attack, the vigorous reply of Jesus, and the effects of this incident upon His enemies.

Woes upon Pharisees and Lawyers
Luke 11:37-54

The setting of this attack was the home, or the temporary residence, of some Pharisee, with whom Jesus was asked to dine. Back of this proffered hospitality, which was evidently hypocritical, and giving rise to it, certain developments among the leading enemies of Jesus had probably taken place at Jerusalem. It is very likely that

1. Setting and Probable Plan of This Attack
Luke 11:37-38

¹⁵See Chapter X, pages 217-219.
¹⁶For a previous attempt of Christ's enemies to find fault with Him under the ceremonial law, see Chapter XII, pages 283-286.

definite plans, as described below, had been made for this prof-
fered entertainment of the Lord Jesus.

Before leaving Jerusalem, as already seen, Jesus had issued this challenge to His enemies: "If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not." Evidently those words would make a lasting impression. Doubtless His enemies had diligently sought how they might meet that challenge with some evidence of evil against the Lord Jesus. Knowing that they could bring nothing against His moral conduct, they had decided, as one may plausibly suppose, to try again to find ground for accusation against Jesus under the ceremonial law. Such a result, as they thought, could be made to appear an adequate answer to Christ's challenge, and would therefore be a short cut to the doing away with His claims of Divinity.

The record is brief; but the probable plan was as follows. The scribes and Pharisees at Jerusalem desired to condemn Jesus under the ceremonial law. To accomplish this purpose, they sent their representatives, Pharisees and lawyers, into the regions where Jesus was ministering. There these emissaries had arranged for this invitation to Jesus to dine with one of their number, the others being present as guests. Possibly they had secured a temporary lodging for that purpose. The whole situation was probably so arranged that Jesus might naturally omit the ceremonial washing before the meal. Some such plan is a highly probable conjecture, as the sequel seems to show very plainly.

Fearless of their designs, Jesus accepted the invitation: "and He went in, and sat down to meat. And when the Pharisee saw it, he marveled that He had not first washed before dinner." What the Pharisee said in his wonder, or thought within his heart, is not given. But the Lord Jesus knew the situation thoroughly. Evidently, as His vigorous denunciations show, He looked upon this incident at the table as the outworking of some deep-laid evil designs, which profoundly stirred His divine indignation against those present and represented on that occasion.

These discerning judgments of the Lord Jesus fell first upon the Pharisees, since His host was one of them on this occasion.

They were also the aggressive leaders in the opposition to Himself, and to the work of His Kingdom. His analysis and His judgments were alike without mercy at this time: for the subjects analyzed and judged were wholly evil.

**2. Discerning
Judgments of
Jesus**
Luke 11:39-52

**(1) Judgments upon
the Pharisees**
Luke 11:39-44

Christ's first judicial movement was to expose and denounce the hypocrisy in the heart of His host, and of the Pharisees generally. Jesus, speaking directly to His host, showed him how superficial, insincere, inadequate, and foolish, was that religion of the Pharisees which spent itself entirely upon external appearances, and failed entirely to cleanse the heart. Again, affirming that *outside* and *inside* in themselves were alike un-moral, Christ urged the Pharisees to give a genuine expression of their religious life from within. He demanded that they manifest a purifying love, and an actual righteousness in their secret hearts, such as His host and those with him certainly did not have in their hearts at that time.

But the Pharisees were yet more under the wrath and judgment of God. This Christ showed, with fearful emphasis, when He began to analyze the outworking in their lives of the general principles of inward evil which He had previously described. The Pharisees were accursed because they were a people of partial acts. They carefully performed the outward and the easy, and, perhaps deliberately, left undone the inward essential things of the spirit, such as "judgment and the love of God." They were accursed because they had forsaken God's laws of righteousness, and were following their own rules of life.

The Pharisees were under the curse also because of their self-seeking motives. The purpose of all their performances was to secure self-exaltation and public applause. They loved the chief seats in the synagogues, and the salutations in the market-places. Finally, they were consigned to woe because their lives were void of anything recognizable as sacred. They were themselves the sources of moral and social contamination to the world in which they lived.¹⁷

No sooner had Jesus completed this analysis of the Pharisees, than one of the lawyers present rose up and said, "Master, in saying this Thou reproachest us also."

(2) Judgments upon the Lawyers
Luke 11:45-52

Probably the special sting was in Christ's reference to the inadequacy of the manner in which the laws, such as that of tithing, were carried out. This judgment would touch the lawyers, because it was their particular duty to unravel

¹⁷Compare these judgments with Christ's analysis in Chapters VII—X, and XII, and the discussion of *Matthew* 23:1-39.

the perplexing problems of law as related to the conduct of life and religious obligations.

Jesus, knowing the refinements of burden which these lawyers heartlessly laid upon the people, denounced these lawyers in an unsparing and unmodified curse. He said,

a. Tyranny and deception of the Lawyers among Men

in effect, that they had no outward conduct that could be approved, and no inward heart of love and compassion from which such conduct could possibly arise. They were only a

sham and a pretense. This accusation and judgment Christ justified by reference to this fact: those lawyers were then pretending to undo the evils of their fathers by building tombs for the prophets whom their fathers had slain; and yet, in their deepest heart, these same tomb-builders were then planning to kill Jesus Christ, Who was among them as a Prophet from God.

They were true to the type of their fathers in their opposition to the grace of God, and to the advancement of His Kingdom in the world. They and their fathers were

b. Opposition of the Lawyers to the Grace of God

responsible for the blood of all the prophets and teachers whom God had sent into the world. That is, these lawyers were pro-

foundly accursed because they were set in opposition to the work of God in the hearts of men. "Ye took away the key of knowledge," said Christ, expressing therein the deepest cause of His divine wrath. "Ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered." They were under the wrath and judgment of God, because, in the last analysis, they were guilty of the unpardonable sin of misleading the people away from the truth and the faith of Christ.

These denunciations by Jesus of the Pharisees and the Lawyers apparently brought the indoor session of this situation

**3. Results Arising from This Question
Luke 11:53-54**

to a close. Possibly the host, with his conniving "guests," adjourned from the table in consternation and confusion of mind. They seem to have gone forth at once out-of-

doors, probably for the purpose of conferring more quickly on what had happened. In summing up the results, both the Lord Jesus, and His enemies, must be considered.

The Lord Jesus was fully justified in the frank course of judgments which He pursued. He was not discourteous to the occasion: the question of courtesy, in fact, does not enter. Outwardly, He was a bidden guest. Really, He was an intended victim. If the supposition of a Jerusalem plot, or any other plot, is true,

the Lord knew it well from the beginning. He knew also the wicked depths of the hearts about Him at that time. He was profoundly defending Himself. He was also beginning at the only possible point to help and bless those whom He thus frankly analyzed and judged. To have done less, would have been a compromise with their evils, and a denial of His own Divine Nature and appointed function as Savior.

**(1) Jesus Justified
in His Judgments**

Christ's enemies were defeated and confused. Whatever plans and hopes they had for this occasion were completely upset. Under the burning words of Jesus, the hypocritical entertainers forgot their original thought of ceremonialism: for Christ, probing deeper than outward conformity, had discovered their guilt. But they did not forget the controlling purpose of their own evil hearts, and their possible responsibility for a favorable report to their evil-minded colleagues back at Jerusalem.

**(2) Christ's
Enemies Defeated
and Confused**

Their purpose, quite evident now, in this hypocritical situation, had been to find some cause of evil against the Son of God. Failing in that, because as God He knew their evil purpose, they came forth from the house of evil intention, and frantically renewed their attack upon Him on the outside. There, as the record states, "the scribes and the Pharisees began to press upon Him vehemently, and to provoke Him to speak of many things; laying wait for Him, to catch something out of His mouth."

Such had been their purpose all the while. The language used in the above statement is very strong. Possibly they "set themselves vehemently against" Christ, attacking Him with personal abuse and a show of violence. Certainly this scene must have been one of loud confusion. The commotion which was thus brought about attracted a great multitude of people. And it was then and there that the Lord Jesus began His last great general appeal to save the ancient Israel of God from the state of sin and error into which they had fallen.

CHAPTER XVI

THE GREAT APPEAL OF CHRIST TO ISRAEL

"Behold, the Lord God will come He shall feed His flock like a Shepherd: He shall gather the lambs with his arms, and carry them in His bosom." *Isaiah 40:10-11.*

"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." *Romans 10:1, 2, 4.*

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." *John 8:32, 36.*

In this chapter an analysis is undertaken of the Lord's last great general appeal to save the Jews. Between the events here considered and the Lord's Death, He did a great deal of work; but much of it was of a semi-private and personal character. He also made powerful appeals, during the Passion Week, to His enemies, who were of the ruling classes in Israel. But the events of this chapter cover the Lord's last general appeal to the Jews as a people.

In these last extensive efforts, Christ appealed first to the Common People of Israel, whom He desired to save from error, and sin, and death. Then He appealed powerfully to the leaders of Israel, that they, with the people, might rightly return to the Lord, and find life with Him. Alternating with these appeals, were the responses of the Lord's enemies, first in a temporary hostility, and finally in a determined purpose to destroy.

I. The Direct Appeal of Christ to the People

When Jesus came forth from the Pharisee's house, as described in the last chapter, there was a prolonged encounter between Him and His enemies, the scribes and the Pharisees, who had been present with Him at the dinner. Attracted by the excitement of this conflict, "many thousands of the multitude were gathered together, insomuch that they trode one upon another." Seeing this great representative gathering, and the opportunity that it afforded, Jesus began at once His direct appeal to the people, to save them from error and sin, unto truth and faith and life.

**Effort to Save
Israel from Her
False Leaders
Luke 12:1—13:9**

1. *Christ's Warning to the People Against the Hypocrisy of Their Religious Leaders.* Beginning on the negative side, in a few tactful words, Christ warned the people against the spiritual dangers to which they were subjected. For sake of added strength to His message, the Lord, seeming for the moment to ignore the crowd that had gathered, addressed His words, at first, to His Disciples; but He spake in the hearing of all the people, and evidently for them all. He issued His warning in these direct words: "Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy."

**Spiritual Dangers
of the People**
Luke 12:1-2

This statement, which was directly to the point, echoed the central thought of the recent experience in the Pharisee's house. Christ desired the people to know the truth. The Pharisees, and their religious confederates, were seeking their own advantage. They were doing so in the name of religion. They were doing so even at the price of misleading immortal souls. They, working at cross-purposes with God's purposes of grace, supposed their secret motives to be unknown. But Christ understood them full well, and announced that their selfish and secret ambitions should be brought to ultimate confusion.

2. *Christ's Encouragement to Faith and Sincerity.* In these words of warning, Christ had clearly defined the spiritual dangers of the people. But it was not the custom of Christ to leave a teaching situation in a merely negative state. Going on in a positive way, He set before the people the vital truth of life for their confidence and sincere acceptance.

Christ gave His instructions at this time in the form of a series of divinely authoritative exhortations. Having pointed out the dangerous leadership of the scribes and the Pharisees, Christ urged the people to stand firm against the seductive efforts of those false teachers. Much of the Lord's powerful appeal at this time is similar to that which He made in the Sermon on the Mount.

First of all, Christ urged the people to trust God and His mercy for salvation. Hypocrisy was unsafe. It could not endure. Truth will come to light. The Pharisees may resort to persecution, and even kill the body. But that is the limit of their power. Christ urged men to fear God, before Whom they must stand in judgment. Fear, as here used, means to trust and obey.

**1. Exhortations in
the Way of Life**
Luke 12:2-40

**(1) Trust God
to Save**
Luke 12:3-12
Cf. Matt. 10:26-33

By way of encouraging this confidence, Christ pointed to the careful goodness of God. God cares even for the sparrow's fall.

Careful Goodness of God

Certainly, then, He will not fail to recognize His own people who trust Him. His affectionate care shall also be toward them, in Heaven and also on earth. The supreme problem, as Christ here insisted, is that of loyal trust in God, whom to oppose, in the inner working of His Spirit, is a fearful, and possibly a fatal, thing. For these reasons Christ would have those addressed to turn away from the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, and to follow His own safe guidance into life eternal.

Continuing His exhortations, and following the suggestion of an appeal from the audience, Christ urged the people to live for

(2) Live for God and Things Spiritual
Luke 12:13-21

God, and for the things of the spirit. The man who interrupted from the audience made this request: "Master, bid my brother divide the inheritance with me." But Jesus, knowing the man's heart, and desiring to help him, and others, said to him, "Man, who made Me a judge or a divider over you?" Then turning more generally to the audience, Jesus continued, "Take heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

Christ thus warned against the danger of living for the mere *things* of this present life. He impressed that warning by telling

Parable of the Foolish Rich Man
Luke 12:16-21

the story of the Foolish Rich Man, who had lived only for the things of life. He had made the sad mistake of leaving God out, and living merely for the things of life, and for the present advantages arising out of an abundance of things. Yet he is pictured as having learned, in an awful moment, that God must be reckoned with, and that too in terms of real life. Such is the fate, said Christ, of all who lay up treasures for themselves, and are not rich toward God.

Live for God. That first. Then trust His providing care. The things of life must be subservient to the spiritual, and they

(3) Trust God's Providing Care
Luke 12:22-34
Cf. Matt. 6:25-33

cannot fail those who are working in harmony with the purposes of God. The argument here is like that in the Sermon on the Mount, and needs not to be analyzed again in detail.¹

¹See Chapter IX, pages 204-211. Note also the additional words of encouragement at this time: "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to

Be prepared also to meet God. "Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning." This injunction follows logically after

(4) Be Prepared to Meet God
Luke 12:35-40

the supreme duty enjoined in the previous argument. "Be ye yourselves like unto men looking for their Lord, when he shall return from the marriage feast; that, when he cometh and knocketh, they may straightway open unto him. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching." Such preparation calls for watchful care. It also brings an honoring reward, even as the returning lord honored his watchful servants. This point was a corrective suggestion. The Pharisees sought the highest honors; but Christ desired all to know that the only honors worth while must come from God as a result of faith and faithfulness. Hence the directness with which Christ applied this parable: "Be ye also ready: for in an hour that ye think not the Son of Man cometh."

Parable of the Watching Servants

Thus far, Christ had spoken of solemn obligations. On whom do they rest? That was the question in the mind of Peter, when he said, "Lord, speakest Thou this parable unto us, or even unto all?" Beginning with an answer to this question, Christ emphasized several truths that were applicable in the outworking of the principles of life and duty which He had already set before the people.

2. Discussion of the Previous Obligations

Luke 12:41—13:9
Cf. Matt. 24:45-51

The duty of faithfulness applies alike to all people. There are no exemptions from the duties which Christ had analyzed and laid upon the hearts of His hearers.

(1) Faithfulness Required of All
Luke 12:41-48
Cf. Matt. 24:45-51

He suggested no modification, except that of increasing the obligations of life in proportion to the larger privileges enjoyed. High position, honorable recognition, and special privilege, all mean larger responsibilities: and responsibilities, of whatever source or kind or rank, must be met. This general truth applied to the Apostles; and it applies to every person who would follow the Lord Jesus Christ. Faithfulness to truth and duty, to duty as defined by truth and as enlarged by privilege, is a first principle of the Christian life.

give you the Kingdom. Sell that ye have, and give alms; make for yourselves purses which wax not old, a treasure in the Heavens that faileth not, where no thief draweth near, neither moth destroyeth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." On the divine definition of the fool, see *Psalms* 14:1, and 53:1, and *Luke* 12:16-21.

This first truth, given in answer to Peter's question, was set forth in the Parable of the Steward. In that story the central point is this: that the Steward was blessed or else he was "cut to sunder, and appointed his portion with the unfaithful," according as he had, or had not, been faithful to the responsibilities placed in his hands. Absolute faithfulness is the law of life. Yet the lack of light and knowledge may soften punishment. The knowledge of truth, however, greatly increases responsibility. It was this latter truth that applied with especial solemnity to the hearers of Jesus on this occasion: for their opportunities to know Christ left them without any showing of an excuse for lack of faith and service.

**Parable of
the Steward**

But the acceptance of these truths was a heroic undertaking. It was so then. It has always been so. Christ foresaw the "fire upon the earth," which would result from His Presence, and from His Truth. He saw in advance the divisions and the strife that would rise among men because some of them, many indeed, would believe on Him. He saw also what these truths meant to Him-

**(2) Truth, Faith,
and Life Produce
Divisions**

Luke 12:49-53

Cf. Matt. 10:34-36

self. He saw, beyond the strifes and the divisions of men, the triumph of faith, and the ultimate glory. But He saw also, before the attainment of that glory, the Cross, the baptism of suffering and death through which He was to pass in the near future. He bore the world's woe upon His own heart until salvation was accomplished.

But He turned quickly from the thought of His own sufferings to the thought of the distracted world, a world void of peace, a world of divisions, where men and women would suffer for their faith in Christ. "For there shall be from henceforth," He said, "five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three." In these figures Christ summarized the tragedy of many a home, wherein the younger members of the family,—the son, the daughter, and the daughter-in-law,—would forsake the heathen faith of their conservative parents, and turn to the Lord Jesus Christ. The price of such faith was measured in secret sorrow, and also at times in world-wide persecutions. The same considerations were involved also in the turning from the traditional religion led by the scribes and the Pharisees to the faith of Jesus Christ. Christ saw the problem, and spoke of it: for wherever men were honest, He was always sympathetic.

**New Faith for
the Younger
Generations**

But this was a case where sympathy required men to do the hard thing. Christ defined the price of faith, and then immediately called upon men to believe. He only asked

(3) Truth and Faith them, however, to assume an open-minded, Ask for Rational reasonable attitude toward the evidences of Response truth with which they were then surrounded. Luke 12:54-59 He was before them, with all the facts and Cf. Matt. 5:25-26 fruitage of His life and ministry of power and Matt. 16:2-3 truth and love. He only asked that men

open their eyes to the spiritual facts, as they did to the other facts of common life, such as the facts of the weather. He asked for rational conclusions respecting the truth as it was in Christ. The truth of Christ, and also the impending judgments of Israel, were alike clear to those who had eyes to see. Christ encouraged men to open their eyes, so that they might see the truth.

Christ's hearers needed then, as men have always needed, the grace of Christ. That alone was sufficient for the repentance and

the fruitfulness which are the basic needs of every life. Backward to the past, the redemption of Christ looks with forgiving grace. Forward to service, that redemption looks with power, and guidance, and inspira-

tion. The imperative of faith is therefore absolute; for men must repent. Contrasting the living with certain who had suffered death, supposedly for their sins, Christ laid upon His bearers the universal law, saying, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."²

The demand for fruit-bearing in life is also imperative. This truth Christ urged through His Parable of the Barren Fig Tree,

which should have only one more season in which to prove its worth in the vineyard.

Parable of the Barren Fig Tree For such proof of worth, the grace of Christ alone was sufficient. In Christ's suggestions for repentance and also for fruitage in life, there was also the suggestion of an overhanging judgment upon the Jews, and an ultimatum of faith to them, which should have caused them to seek Christ at once as the way of life and acceptance with God.

²There is an interesting contrast between the two groups of the dead to which reference is made on this occasion. The first group were Galileans, probably introduced here by Jerusalem Jews; the others, introduced by Jesus, were men of Jerusalem. The former were men put to death by Pilate; the latter were the victims of an accident. The former were introduced with the thought of their very great sinfulness; the latter, for the purpose of giving point to the truth, that all are alike sinful, all need forgiveness, and all must repent, or else perish. Possibly there was here a fling at Jesus, in that the Galileans had more widely accepted Him. If so, His retort was perfect when He suggested that the Jews at Jerusalem equally needed Him and His forgiving grace and mercy.

II. The Enemies of Christ Resent His Efforts to Save the People

The enemies of Christ, instead of heeding His call to repentance and fruitfulness, came forward again in open hostility to the Lord. For a time they had been comparatively quiet. Possibly it took them some time to understand the underlying purpose in the broad general appeal which Jesus was making to the common people of Israel. But these politico-religious leaders of Israel, when once they saw that Jesus was trying to rescue Israel from their leadership, which He regarded as erroneous and full of peril to the people and the nation, came again into the active foreground of the next few scenes, manifesting resentment at the Lord's salutary efforts.

1. *The Renewed Charge of Violating the Sabbath Law.* The object of Christ's enemies, at this time, was to off-set His appeal to the people, and to clear themselves from the charges which He had made against their false leadership. They renewed their hostilities in an outburst of indignation because, as they supposed, Jesus had violated the law of the Sabbath Day.

Woman Healed on the Sabbath Day
Luke 13:10-21

The chosen leader of this new opposition was the ruler of the synagogue where Jesus was teaching on a certain Sabbath Day.

1. **Nature and Intent of the Opposition**
Luke 13:10-14 While the Lord was speaking, "a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years" came into His presence. Her affliction was so great that "she was bowed together, and could in no wise lift herself up." Jesus, seeing her, said to her: "Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity." Then He laid His hands upon her, "and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God."

But the ruler of the synagogue was "moved with indignation because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath." Probably he was partially sincere in this misguided feeling. If so, he was blind both to the proper spiritual results of this healing which followed in the conduct of the woman in "glorifying God," and also to the just and proper use and application of the law. Almost certainly, he took this occasion to retaliate upon Jesus for His recent appeal to the people against the false teaching of their leaders. Hence this ruler of the synagogue rebuked the multitude, saying, "There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the day of the Sabbath." Evidently there was here an effort to discredit the spiritual leadership of Jesus in the eyes of the people.

To this statement the Lord's reply was both sharp and effective. His use of the plural form in His address, suggests that He saw

**2. Christ's
Justification under
the Sabbath Law
Luke 13:15-21**

some kind of frame-up back of this ruler's statement. Of course, the Lord Jesus understood the entire situation. Hence He was fearlessly direct in His characterization of the ruler and those associated with him, addressing them at once as "hypocrites."

Here again Jesus faced a composite situation, as respects His enemies. They were acting upon ignorance, insincerity, and a blinding partial application of the law. Back of it all was an evident malicious spirit and purpose on the part of some to use every element of the situation to incriminate Jesus in the minds of the people at that time. Christ's divine grasp of the inner facts of this situation is seen in His first sentence: "Ye hypocrites, doth not each of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan had bound, lo, these eighteen years, to have been loosed from this bond on the Sabbath Day?"

The comprehensive fitness of these words to that occasion was a result of Christ's divine insight into the situation. In these

**3. Effectiveness of
Christ's Words
Luke 13:17-21**

few words, Jesus exposed the hidden motives and the hypocrisy of His enemies. He also showed their basic error to be the want of understanding and spiritual sympathy with the true nature and function of law. He furthermore justified His act of healing under the law. He built up a strong appeal for common sympathy toward this woman who had sought His merciful ministry on the Sabbath Day. She was a woman. She was a daughter of Abraham. She was bound by Satan. She had suffered for eighteen years. The appeal touched the heart of the people. "And as He said these things, all His adversaries were put to shame: and all the multitude rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by Him."

But Jesus, seeing these results, expressed no joy over His triumph. Instead of that, He continued to speak to the people

**Parables of the
Mustard Seed and
the Leaven
Luke 13:18-21**

in a constructive way. Again He compared the Kingdom of God to the growing mustard seed, and to the secret working of hidden leaven. His obvious purpose in the use of these parables at this time was to reassure the people: for these parables He meant to be applied to His

enemies. They had not the Kingdom of God in their hearts, neither its extensive power, nor its intensive sanctifying spirit. They were therefore misleading the people, and opposing the Son of God and His work. The effect of these suggestions would tend to inform and strengthen the faith of the people in the leadership of the Lord Jesus, as opposed to His enemies.³

2. *The Question, "Are They Few that Be Saved?"* For a while after this incident, there was comparative quiet again. The

How Many Saved?
Luke 13:22-30

hostile scribes and Pharisees allowed Christ to go "on His way through cities and villages, teaching, and journeying on unto Jerusalem."

Finally, some one, probably an enemy, as the sequel suggests, asked Christ this question: "Lord, are they few that be saved?"

In Christ's reply to that question are two distinct parts. First, He laid down the general truth, that there must be a sincere and

1. Christ's Reply:
the General Truth
Luke 13:24-27

heroic spiritual effort. "Strive," He said, "to enter in by the narrow door: for many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able." Then He pictured the

sad plight of those who had refused to enter that door, when it should be shut, and they, from without, should hopelessly beg for an admission. But the Lord, Whom they had rejected, would summarily dismiss them as "workers of iniquity."

This truth is one of general application. Now is the time of acceptance and effort. Men should enter into the Kingdom while the door is open. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock," said Christ, in another connection. "To-day if ye shall hear His voice, harden not your heart." A definite stand for Christ, and public profession of Him are required.⁴ The conditions here insisted upon are two: full vital acceptance of Christ, and the sincere life that should follow. It was not enough to have lived in the physical presence of Christ. Merely to have heard Him speak, will not suffice. These things alone counted for nothing then. Neither does it count for anything worth while to-day merely to live in a community of churches and of Gospel privileges. Mere decency is an excellent thing. But God requires a definite organization of one's spiritual life, through faith and service, with Jesus Christ as a personal Savior. Sincere faith in the heart counts. Sincere public acknowledgment of Christ counts. Sincere Christian effort in active life counts. God's warning of love is this: "Seek ye the Lord while He may be

³For Christ's previous use of these two parables, see Chapter XI, pages 245-246.

⁴See *Revelation* 3:20; *Psalms* 95:7-8; *Romans* 10:9-11; and compare *Matthew* 10:32 (with *John* 11:42), and 33 (with *John* 14:6).

found, call ye upon Him while He is near." "Strive to enter in by the narrow door."

This was the general truth which Christ announced. Then He made a special application of it to the scribes and the Pharisees,

**2. Truth Specially
Applied to the Jews
Luke 13:28-30**

who were opposing the advancement of His Kingdom. Christ was evidently speaking directly to these rulers of the Jews when He said: "There shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the Kingdom of God, and yourselves cast forth without."

In these words, and in the two following sentences, with which Christ closed His answer to the question concerning the number who are saved, three things claim attention. First, it will be remembered that the rulers of Israel had lined themselves up strongly with Abraham;⁵ yet Jesus affirmed that the anguish of those scribes and Pharisees should be increased by their seeing Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in His Kingdom, and themselves shut out. Those words must have cut deep into their souls; yet there is even in those words a kindly appeal for faith in those who were willing to hear Christ's call to their souls.

Again, with the confidence of certainty, Jesus affirmed the universal extent and the effectiveness of His Kingdom, which should succeed in gathering its fellowship from all parts of the world. "They shall come," He said, "from the east and west, and from the north and south, and shall sit down in the Kingdom of God." There was here a solemn suggestion to the Jews that they, in opposing Him, were closing their doors against that spiritual fellowship for which they were divinely chosen in ancient times. Finally, Jesus projected the future of the Jews. They were the people of first opportunity. They were then, at least as represented in their leaders, sinning against light, and truth, and life. But ultimately they were destined to see the truth. The first shall be last; but eventually they shall return to right fellowship with God through the redeeming grace of Jesus Christ.

That is, in answering the question as to the number who are saved, Jesus has done two things. He set forth, first, the great responsibility for seeking the way of life, and of seeking it in the correct and definite way. Then He defined the particular weight of additional responsibility which rested upon the Jews, as descending from the ancient Israel of God, to maintain the fellowship of their forefathers, and to come at once into the

⁵See Chapter XIV, pages 349-351.

advancing and expanding Kingdom of God. His appeal to them was that they rise to the full measure of their spiritual privilege as the once chosen people of God.

3. *The Effort of Christ's Enemies to Frighten Him Away from Jerusalem.* In the previous statements Jesus had drawn a

Christ vs. Herod

Luke 13:31-35

Cf. Matt. 23:37-39

definite line of separation between the leaders of the Jews then before Him and the ancient patriarchs and prophets who were within the Kingdom of God. The situation thus described by Jesus was keenly felt by the scribes and the Pharisees, who doubtless feared His propagation of that truth in the regions of Jerusalem, which was their stronghold. They therefore resorted to a curious and ineffective measure to rid themselves of this danger.

The work of Jesus, for some undefined time, had led Him gradually toward Jerusalem. By the time of this incident, He was near the City, if not already within it.

1. **Effort to Frighten the Son of God**

Luke 13:31-33

The Rulers of the Jews feared the results of His visit and teachings. Certain Pharisees tried, therefore, to frighten Him away from that part of the country. They came to Him, saying: "Get Thee out, and go hence; for Herod would fain kill Thee."

That was not friendly counsel. The answer of Jesus was as significant as the suggestion had been curious. He spoke from a

2. **Christ's Life Identical with the Purposes of God**

profound assurance that His life was identical with the undefeatable purposes of God. Therefore, in His first statement, He showed a divine contempt for this suggestion of His fearing King Herod. "Go and say to that fox," said Jesus, "Behold, I cast out devils and perform cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I am perfected. Howbeit I must go on my way to-day and to-morrow and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem." That is, His life was perfectly in accord with the purposes of God, and it was therefore secure until those purposes were accomplished.

Suddenly Jesus turned His thought to His enemies, and to the sad plight of their once favored City. The very blindness of this

3. **Divine Pathos for Blindness and Death of Israel**
Luke 13:34-35

scheme to scare Him showed the hopelessness of their spiritual condition. Christ wept for their desolation. They had rejected Him. They had lined themselves up with those who had always opposed the work of God. There was cause for tears in the thought of the curse which that City

had thus brought upon itself. How the mighty had fallen! How low, indeed! There is a deep unanalyzable pathos in these tearful words of Jesus, when He thus responds to the low effort of God's chosen people to frighten His Son away from the sacred City where God had once made His dwelling place. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem!" There were volumes of history—and of destiny—in those painful words. No man can ever realize their meaning to-day, and be quite the same man thereafter.

III. The Appeal of Christ to the Rulers of the Jews

From the pathos of the last scene the mind glides easily into the next series of events, which reflect the exact feeling of Jesus toward His opponents at this time. Some of them, no doubt, were deceived by their fellows as to the truth. Many of them were wilfully blind and resisting. The leaders among them were rapidly drawing to a definite decision to put Jesus to death. Yet He yearned for Israel, that they might be saved. With divine earnestness, He made another appeal to the leaders of the people. If He could only save the leaders! He approached them from five different angles. He tried to help them to see clearly, to think definitely, and to act safely. His five-fold appeal contains some of the most affecting words which the Lord spoke in all of His public ministry.

1. Christ's Appeal in Terms of Truth to the Leaders of the Jews. Jesus gave commendation at times, but no compliments.

He was always sincere and straightforward. He considered life always as immortal. His programs for life were co-extensive with life, reaching into eternity. He defined life, and its relationships, and its duties, and its destinies, in terms of eternal truths. In this first appeal, He lifted the thought of His hearers to this higher level, by presenting to them four truths of life which the leaders of Israel in that day needed to observe.

They needed, first of all, to recognize the true function of law. They made law an end in itself. That was wrong. Eternal life,

with its blessedness here and hereafter, is the true end, toward which all law and its observance is but a means. The scribes and Pharisees had lost sight of this truth. By

rigid insistence upon law as an end, they had obscured the true function of the law, and were so using it as to defeat the higher purposes for which law existed and was ordained. From this

**Four Truths for
the Leaders of
the Jews**

Luke 14:1-24

**1. True Function
of the Law**

Luke 14:1-6

confusing error Jesus desired to liberate Israel's leaders, so that they might see clearly to lead the people into the way of life everlasting.

The incident happened in a Pharisee's house, whither Jesus had gone "on a Sabbath to eat bread." Possibly the occasion had been maliciously planned: for the enemies of Christ were there, "watching Him." There was present also a man who had the dropsy, possibly brought there by the Pharisees, as a part of their plan. Jesus saw the evil thought in their hearts, and was more aggressive than usual. Yet He was also kind in His treatment of the situation before Him: for He desired to teach the rulers of the Jews a great truth at this time.

Therefore Jesus, before healing the man, appealed to the hearts of those about Him in this question: "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not?" The Pharisees made no reply. Did they not know the law? Possibly not. Jesus was fair with them. He asked another teaching question, quoting the law that was applicable to that situation: "Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a well, and will not straightway draw him up on a Sabbath Day?" Thus the law, and its obvious application, and also its appointed function, were made so plain that leaders of Israel "could not answer again unto these things." But their silence did not mean that they were at all ready to follow the truth as it was correctly set forth on this occasion.

Again Jesus taught them, on this same occasion, the importance of humility. He saw how the guests who were invited vied with one another for the most honorable seats at the table. In this performance Christ saw reflected their erroneous and inadequate philosophy of life, which spent itself in seeking present external and temporary preferment.

2. Importance of Humility
Luke 14:7-11

This wrong idea of life, with its natural conduct, as seen on that occasion, Jesus sought to correct by reciting the Parable of the Bidden Guests. In this parable Jesus suggested that a guest who was bidden to a marriage feast should seek a lower seat, and wait to be honored by his host by being invited to take a more exalted position.

Parable of the Bidden Guests
Luke 14:7-11

Honor and humility, as here considered, are linked together as correlated facts in life. Humility is inherent. Honor is the social correlative. True honor is a matter of right recognition. It is a thing conferred by others. Honor and dignity of life, as here considered, are, in their final estimate, a genuine gauge of

life, which brook no deceptions. Christ pointed also, in these words, to the honors which God might bestow as a result of His own searching judgments, and suggested that the rulers of the Jews were not in line for those divine honors. Instead of that, the selfish honors for which they scrambled at the feasts would come to nothing, and the true honors from God, which they might have had, would be given to some other more humble and more worthy people.

Jesus held up before the rulers of the Jews something far higher than personal self-seeking. The relation of humility and honor

3. True Recompense of Service

Luke 14:12-14

led on, in the thought of Jesus, to His emphasizing the true recompense of life as arising from service. "When thou makest a dinner or a supper," He said, "call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, nor thy kinsmen, nor rich neighbors; lest haply they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, bid the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; because they have not wherewith to recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed in the resurrection of the just."

Service is an expression of love. True service, therefore, finds its joys complete, and its rewards fully realized, in getting itself done so as to bless others. The reflex blessedness of service is real; but its true rewards are spiritual. They are therefore *in kind*: for love is spiritual, and never mercenary. Feast for feast may be without love. But service that seeks only to express love is assured of spiritual recompense. These principles were in full contradiction to the loveless sham of the Pharisees on this occasion, and to the evident unfriendly hospitality accorded to Jesus at this time. His desire was that those about Him should rise to the higher level of unselfish service.

This emphasis which Jesus had laid upon recompense in spiritual things suggested to one of the guests this observation: "Blessed

4. Results vs. Conditions of Blessedness

Luke 14:15-24

Cf. Matt. 22:1-10

is he that shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God." That fact was true enough. But those words, as then spoken, betrayed, to the discerning ear of Jesus, a danger which beset the Jews in a special way at that time. It was the danger of thinking overmuch of the *results*, and not enough of the *conditions*, of blessedness.

Results follow from conditions fulfilled. There is a law of cause and effect in spiritual things. Men must accept God's conditions, respond to His calls, and do His commandments.

That was the truth which the scribes and the Pharisees had overlooked, which they needed again to learn and to heed. They

**Parable of the
Great Supper
Luke 14:16-24**

needed also to know that God's plans were in no danger of failing merely because His once chosen people had failed. No. God could secure guests for His feasts from other sources. It was even possible, as Christ suggested here, for God to go on with His plans without those Jews who had declined the invitations of Christ's Kingdom. But such declining, and such excusing of themselves, as the Jews were then doing, would not at all avert the wrath of an angry God. Men must reckon with God, on His terms. They must answer for their attitudes toward His invitations. "None of those men which were bidden shall taste of My supper," were the words of solemn warning with which Jesus closed His appeal through truth to the leaders of Israel.

2. *Christ's Appeal in Terms of Sympathy to the Leaders and the Common People of the Jews.* The conditions of acceptance

**Necessity of
Counting the Cost
Luke 14:25-35**

and blessedness are fixed. But Jesus knew well what it meant for some to meet those conditions. With kindly sympathy He led His hearers on through the thought of counting the cost of discipleship. The appeal is more popular in its nature than that already studied. There is a meaning here that is personal, and another that is somewhat ecclesiastical in nature. There was a special appeal to those who had spiritual apperception enough to understand the message which He delivered.

On the personal side, there must be faithful endurance for Christ's sake, whatever the cost. The love for Christ must be

**1. Faithful
Endurance for
Christ's Sake**

supreme, sharing first place with no other affection of life. Men must also take up the cross and bear it, if they would be disciples of Christ. Having made up their minds to these things, men must carry them out with faith and perseverance, subordinating thereto all other concerns of life. The beginning should be good; but it is the end that counts. A devotion that gives up is worthless, like salt that has lost its savour. Faithfulness to the end is the price men have always had to pay for the privilege of hope in Christ.

But discipleship involved another problem for the Jews. The new Christian life called for a breaking away from their old sacred religion, and from traditions dear to their hearts. It meant also that they would not be able in every case to take with

them into the new Kingdom of Christ all who were dear to them in this life. Jesus knew the depths of pathos in both of these conditions. Yet He urged them to count the

**2. Breaking Away
from Forms and
Persons Dear to
the Heart**

cost, and then *to pay it*. Knowing well that the challenge of faith would touch their deepest heart, at least in many cases, yet

Christ insisted that there was no compromise. Love and service to Him must be first, and faithful to the end, if men wished to be saved.^a

**3. Christ's Appeal in Terms of Divine Love to the Leaders
of the Jews.** Then, as if He wished to lift the thought of faith

**Three Parables:
God not Willing
That Any Should
Perish**

Luke 15:1-32

above all considerations of cost, Christ made His next appeal in terms of God's love, and of His desire to save the lost. This appeal had a particular immediate reference to God's desire to save Israel. This general truth, with its suggestions of a particular application,

Jesus set before His hearers in three parables—that of the lost sheep, that of the lost coin, and that of the wayward son, who was set in sharp contrast with his selfish elder brother.

The immediate occasion of these three parables was a motion on the part of Christ's enemies. The general situation continued

**Occasion and
Purpose of These
Parables**

Luke 15:1-2

the same as during the previous speech, except that it grew a little more intense. The great multitudes were more eager to hear the Lord Jesus. His gracious words, lost for the most part on the leaders, were received gladly

by the unprejudiced common people. From all sides "all the publicans and sinners" drew near to hear Him speak. But when the scribes and the Pharisees saw this popular response, they set up a chorus of complaint: "This Man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." In reply to this complaint, Jesus spoke these three parables of grace. His general purpose was to defend the people and Himself. But He desired also to reach and save His enemies. He gave them, in these parables, a new conception of God and of His attitude toward men. The general truth in all of these parables is that God, Who is partial neither to Pharisees, nor publicans, nor sinners, desires to save them all from their sins.

This truth of saving grace, with its universal appeal of Divine Love, was set forth first in the Parable of the Lost Sheep. In this parable, Christ argued, upward from the actual experience of

^aSee page 384 above.

human kindness, to the perfect heart of God. "What man of you," said Christ, "having a hundred sheep, and having lost one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing." And having come home, he "callethe his friends and neighbors" for a community of joy, because he had found his lost sheep. "Even so," Christ explained, "there shall be joy in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over the ninety and nine righteous persons, which need no repentance."

The purpose of this parable was corrective, as well as universally gracious. In it Christ laid special emphasis upon the joy there is in Heaven over the *act of repentance*. In a world of sin and sinners, such as does actually exist, one person's repenting is an occasion of more joy in Heaven than all the achievements of the ninety-nine who suppose themselves to need no repentance.

The point of this parable is in the comparison. God gave His Son in order to save men from sin and death. God's highest joy is to see His love effective, to see His plans working out in the changes from death unto life in the hearts of those who repent and accept Christ as Savior. That is what repentance signifies. The source of heavenly joy is the *saving*. That joy arises from the effective working of divine love in the hearts of men. "Even so," as Christ explained this same parable on another occasion, "it is not the will of your Father Which is in Heaven that one of these little ones should perish."

Respecting this important truth, the leaders of Israel in that day were in error. Supposing their formal righteousness to be adequate, if not indeed complete, the scribes and Pharisees thought of themselves as the peculiar delight of the Lord. But Christ's reply to them in this parable suggested that they, by resisting Christ and His work of grace, were really obstructing the very source of the highest joy possible to the heart of God: for His first joy is to see His love and grace work life in the hearts of men.

This appeal of saving love was set forth again in the Parable of the Lost Coin. Christ appealed a second time to human experience. "Or what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a lamp, and sweep the house, and seek diligently until she find it? And when she hath

1. Parable of the
Lost Sheep
Luke 15:3-7
Cf. Matt. 18:12-14

(1) Joy over the
Act of Repentance

(2) Error of the
Jewish Leaders

2. Parable of the
Lost Coin
Luke 15:8-10

found it, she calleth together her friends and neighbors, saying: 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I had lost.' Even so, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

Here the joy is in the *fact of repentance*. The joy is in the saved, as the previous joy was in the saving. All Heaven doubt-

less resounds with the new joy of the new fellowship of another soul new-born into the Kingdom of God. The heart of God is rejoiced when a sinner turns from sin, and through faith in Christ becomes a child of God. This result of joy is a fact, here thought of in the absolute. There is no comparison. In every person who responds, through repentance and faith, to the call of God, the joy of Heaven is complete, a perfect joy. When sinners repent, and believe, and attain to eternal life in Christ, they are in themselves a source of eternal joy to the Father in Heaven, and to all who best know the meaning of eternal redemption.

Again the truth was both corrective and universally appealing. The Jews had scorned the thought of Christ's attention to publi-

cans and sinners. But Jesus desired His mistaken hearers to know that the highest joys of Heaven arose not from those things

which the scribes and the Pharisees so highly esteemed. God looks for the first occasion of joy to one fact in human experience. He looks for life. He looks for the effectiveness of His love. He looks for repentance and faith. God rejoices when men do respond. He rejoices in them who have responded.

But the Jewish leaders were denying the Lord this joy. They were rejecting Christ and the provisions of grace. They were not a source of peculiar joy to God, as they supposed themselves to be. Instead of that, they were antagonizing the work of God's saving love. They were denying to Him the joy which He should have in their own redeemed lives. They were trying to defeat that occasion of joy in the hearts of others. They were robbing God: for the joy of Heaven arises from the act and the fact of repentance, which, when true, are inseparable from a saving and an honoring faith in Jesus Christ.

Both of these ideas were translated into terms of human experience in the Parable of the Prodigal Son and His Elder Brother. There is also in this parable an effective picture of the Heavenly Father's yearning heart to save sinners—all sinners who would repent and return unto Him.

(1) Joy in the Fact of Repentance

(2) Lesson to the Jewish Leaders

3. Parable of the Prodigal Son and His Elder Brother
Luke 15:11-32

This parable, which is probably the greatest of all parables, sets forth truth that is applicable to all the world and dear to every heart. Like the two parables that precede, this third parable was also spoken in answer to the murmuring of the Jews against Christ for His personal interest in publicans and sinners. Immediately, there was a reflection of the Israel of that day in each of the two Sons represented in this parable.

The story of the Wayward Son exhibits the readiness of God to receive sinners in general, and wayward Israel in particular.

(1) The Prodigal Son: God's Forgiving Love
Luke 15:11-24

This prodigal son had taken his heritage and had gone away and spent it, or wasted it, in riotous living. But he at length realized his desperate situation. Having come to himself, he arose, and returned in shame to his father, who, for love, forgave the son, and restored him unto himself. This was a picture of Divine Love in its attitude of readiness to forgive and to save all who turn from sin unto God, and seek Him in the way in which He has chosen to extend His saving love to a lost world.

Immediately, this truth applied to the Jews. Toward them God had dealt bountifully in His goodness. But they, like the prodigal son, had taken God's goodness, and then had gone away from Him. Spiritually, they were, at this time, living in a far country.

a. Truth Applied to the Jews

In moral and spiritual blindness and isolation, Israel, as a nation, was trying to live on the mere husks of a once vital religion. Many of them, their leaders included in the number, had gone far away into sin. Yet God's own Son was urging them to arouse themselves from their spiritual deadness, and to return to God, and to the Kingdom of His Son. No joy to the Father in Heaven would be greater, as this parable argues, than for Him to see His saving grace find acceptance with His chosen people, and save them from their sins.

This truth of Divine Love applies also universally. Its appeal touches "publicans and sinners" of all ages. This parable exalts the appeal of saving grace above the accidents of race, and caste, and all other conditions of life. It shows the love of God in its

b. Truth Applied Universally

longing desire to save the lost in all the world. This third parable was therefore a complete vindication of Christ's interest in the publicans and sinners to whom He had given His divine attention. The sinners who repented were the source of general rejoicing in Heaven. The lost who were saved were the source

of joy in the heart of God. That is the universal truth in these parables. Divine Love rejoices to forgive, and finds pleasure in the blessedness of those who have been forgiven.

But the story of the Elder Brother held up before Israel a very different picture, in which they might also see themselves

(2) The Elder
Brother: God's Joy
Marred by the
Rulers of the Jews
Luke 15:25-32

reflected. This elder brother, coming from the field, drew near to the house, where his father was making merry over the return of the wayward younger son. But the elder brother was not in sympathy with the occasion of this rejoicing. He began to hesitate,

and to inquire, and to be angry, and to refuse either to promote or to participate in the joys of his father, and even to complain at the cause of that joy. To all of this want of sympathetic response, however, the father remonstrated with the most kindly words: "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that is mine is thine. But it was meet to make merry and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found."

Thus Christ held up to the scribes and the Pharisees a picture of what they were, in all the unspeakable ingratitude of their opposition to God and to the work of Christ. God had done everything possible for them. But they were not themselves a part of the Father's joy, nor were helping to increase that joy by encouraging others to come to God through faith in His Son. Instead of that, like the surly elder brother, the leaders of Israel were doing all they could to mar the joys of the Lord by their murmuring oppositions to His work of grace in the hearts of men. In a word, the story of the Prodigal Son sets forth, immediately, God's attitude toward the Jews, and the story of this contemptible Elder Brother reflected the ungracious attitude of Israel's leaders toward the Lord their God.

4. *Christ's Appeal in Terms of Fear to the Leaders of the Jews.* In the previous parables Jesus laid before the Jews and their leaders some powerful arguments of divine grace in their favour. He next appealed to their fear. If they would not heed the pleadings of divine love, Christ would move them with words of divine warning. These notes of spiritual alarm He sounded in two solemn parables—that of the Unjust Steward, and that of the Rich Man and Lazarus. In the beginning of this appeal, Christ addressed His words to His disciples; but the development of the story shows that this was only a tactful way of reaching the scribes and the Pharisees, who were in the audience, and for whom this divine warning was especially intended.

This divine warning was an appeal for men to fear the consequences of divine judgment, against which men must prepare themselves. This truth Christ set forth in the Parable of the Unjust Steward. In this story, by means of the contrast which it suggested, Christ made use of an instance of worldly wisdom to point the great spiritual truth of eternal judgment.

1. Parable of the Unjust Steward
Luke 16:1-18

The parable is the story of an unjust steward. For wasting his master's goods, this steward was about to be called to give an account of his stewardship. But he, knowing the consequences of ejection from his office, unjustly manipulated his master's accounts with the servants so as to obligate them to himself, in point of friendship and care, when he should be cast forth from his office. That manipulation was unjust and wrong. But from the standpoint of worldly wisdom and worldly prudence, the unjust steward had acted with foresight and prudence in the light of the facts which lay before him. From that standpoint, for his foresight and keenness of response to the situation, he was commended even by the master whom he had defrauded.

The central meaning of this parable inheres in a single point: this shrewd man of the world foresaw the day of reckoning, and prepared for the consequences. That point of his conduct was one which, in a different and far higher sense, Christ desired all men to imitate. It was also a principle of action which the leaders of the Jews in that day were far from following.

(2) Meaning of the Parable
Luke 16:8b-13
Cf. Matt. 6:24

This application of the parable Christ continued to emphasize by a series of contrasting thoughts. The unjust steward was living for this present worldly life alone; but the child of God was living for an eternal life. Yet this worldly man, *within the limited sphere of his life*, was exercising prudence against the day of judgment in worldly things; whereas the leaders of the Jews were exercising no care at all, and all men, alas! too little care, for the great fact of spiritual judgment. The worldly man was wise enough, in his limited way, to use his money so as to make friends that should welcome him in the day of temporal adversity; but the leaders even of religion in that day were not using their material blessings, through sincerity of charity and other services, so as to make friends who would welcome them even in the day of eternal happiness.

The application of these contrasting truths to the scribes and the Pharisees was very evident. Through unfaithfulness and misuse of the temporal goodness of God, these "children of the light" were proving themselves entirely unfit for the higher riches of the spirit. They had misused the trust of truth and a kingdom which God had once placed in their hands. They had betrayed the Spirit of God for selfish purposes. Their secret trouble was this: with worldly wisdom, and with worldly ideals, they were serving the world; and yet they were expecting to receive awards that were spiritual and eternal. They were trying to live as if it were possible thus to serve both God and Mammon.

This searching analysis was made primarily for the hypocritical scribes and Pharisees, and they knew that fact. When Jesus declared their effort at a double program to be impossible, they scoffed at Him, because they were lovers of money. Possibly they taunted Him as a mere decrrier of wealth, when He was Himself only a poor Galilean.

(3) **Standard of
Judgment in This
Parable**
Luke 16:14-18

But that kind of argument did not justify their duplicity and insincerity. Christ here suggested the definite standard of judgment to which He would subject their inadequate lives and false principles of leadership.

They sought the outward verdict of men. God was looking into their hearts. They used religion and wealth to impose upon the minds of men. God counted such standards an abomination in His sight. They were spiritually blind. The fact was marked against them. They had lost their sympathetic touch with the inner meaning of their traditional religion. That fact, too, was marked against them. They were unresponsive to the great transitional event through which the Kingdom of God was then passing, from the old to the new order. Everywhere believers were pressing into the Kingdom, yet they stood aloof.

But their aloofness did not at all modify the standards of judgment by which God would judge their lives. The moral and spiritual law of life remained the same. The new order of the Kingdom of Christ only made that law more exacting. As an example of this truth, Christ cited the law of divorce, as it was to be observed in His Kingdom: "Every one that putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth one that is put away from a husband committeth adultery." Thus Christ revived the true meaning of an ancient law, which, under the scribes and Pharisees, had become a very lax regulation of social life. This example of the law showed how

the deeper meaning of the law was God's standard for His Kingdom, and for His judgment upon the lives of men.⁷

This close analysis led Jesus naturally to His next words of warning, which He expressed through the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus. The Jews of that day, and even their religious leaders, were living for things temporal, such as wealth and social ratings of various kinds, and had lost sight of the spirit and truth of life. This parable

**2. Parable of the
Rich Man and
Lazarus
Luke 16:19-31**

seems to have been spoken to teach the Jews how ineffective, and how disastrous, was their philosophy of living for the present only.

The Rich Man of the parable, with his gorgeous apparel, and his sumptuous feasting, was a portrait of the rich and worldly-minded Pharisees, or the wealthy and indifferent Sadducee, of that day. In the spiritual fate that fell upon this Rich Man, Christ intended that His hearers should see how their principles of life would lead to spiritual calamity. Riches, and hypocrisy, and the applause of men cannot save in an hour such as is pictured in this parable. In that hour the memory of these delusions of life will add anguish to eternal woes.

The warning force of Christ's words rises as He proceeds with His picture of the two men in the after-world. Lazarus is blessed in the world of the redeemed. The Rich Man represents the predicament of one who has come to realize the wisdom of life after it is too late. How much he would give then for one moment of comfort! Oh, if he only had another chance for himself! How gladly, too, would he unselfishly lead others aright! But he cannot! How earnestly he prays for some special, overwhelmingly convincing plan, or message, to warn those dear to him! But he was informed that the Light of Life was sufficiently plain in Moses and the Prophets! "Let them hear them!" That is God's way of guiding men into the better world of joy hereafter.

The meaning of these words, as intended for the enemies of Christ, was sympathetic, but definite and awe-inspiring. Christ meant that these Jews must face about in their whole conception of life, and live for things spiritual. He meant further that they must respond to the sacred Word of God, whose plain teachings, if followed, would lead to faith in the Son of God. That Word was their only guide; and by their response to that Word they would be judged. They must hear Moses and the Prophets, who testify of Christ.

⁷Compare Matthew 5:32, and 19:9. See also the discussions in Chapter VIII, pages 177-180; and Chapter XVII, pages 417-422.

The Lord Jesus added to His divine appeal at this time an effective dramatic emphasis, when He put this ultimatum of faith, as spoken in the parable, into the mouth of Abraham, in whom the scribes and the Pharisees placed their most exalted hope. Here their father Abraham is represented as laying down for them the final law of faith in Christ through the Word of God. That is, Jesus thus affirmed that God had done for the Jews, as also for all the world, all that is necessary for Him to do. The powers of evidence and arguments have been exhausted. If men will perish, then they must perish! It remains for them to decide what reply they will make to the truth and call of God in His Word.

5. *Christ's Appeal in Terms of First Needs to the Leaders of the Jews.* In order to awaken an active spiritual response in

Two Final Lessons

those to whom He had appealed, Jesus closed this long discourse with two practical lessons, such as would touch the hearts of all of His hearers. These lessons were those of forgiveness and faith. Again He spoke more directly to His disciples, who would set the example of right response; but quite evidently Christ made His appeal strongly to those who had been in opposition to Him, desiring here to reach them without the possible offense of a direct address.

Christ desired to stir up the springs of spiritual action, by setting up a felt need to which His entire audience might respond.

1. Lesson in Forgiveness

Luke 17:1-4

Cf. Matt. 18:15-35

This plan was psychologically correct: for when the motions of the soul have once begun, then additional responses are possible. Jesus began this new departure in His more general appeal with a strong lesson in the duty and necessity of forgiveness. He knew well that the appeal in this lesson would touch a felt need in every heart. Tactfully also, in order to make the truth and need more universally inclusive with His audience then present, He spoke the first part of this lesson in the third person, impersonally, seeming thus to concede a universal weakness that would tend to draw His hearers together in a closer moral and spiritual sympathy.

This lesson applied to the scribes and the Pharisees. Possibly it was meant primarily for them. Certainly they were in deep

(1) Truth Applied to the Scribes and Pharisees

need of the spirit here set forth: for they had recently been warned against the supreme offenses involved in leading men astray. "It is impossible," Jesus announced in general terms, "but that occasions of stumbling should come: but woe

unto him, through whom they come! It were well for him if a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, rather that he should cause one of these little ones to stumble."

That judgment was concrete and awe-inspiring. But this statement is only one of many in which the Son of God impressed men with the fearfulness of the sin of misleading immortal souls. In that period of transition from the old order to the new order in the Kingdom of Grace, offenses were inevitable. There would be many "occasions of stumbling." The consequences of ignorance, error, and deception, would be great, because eternal. Spiritual leadership must therefore be sincere, informed, and Spirit-led. Christ suggests that some of it was wilfully otherwise. Yet God was ready to recognize the first motions toward the right in every heart, and to forgive wherever men made forgiveness possible. So also must be the attitude of man toward man. In order that the truth may be known, there must be a careful leadership in the truth, and a breadth of charity in the heart that would receive the truth, and help others to find and follow it.

Hence the universal responsibility of correcting an error, and of forgiving the sinner. This lesson was needed by the leaders of Israel in that day, who had stood out so hard against the teachings of Jesus. Men set in mind and heart, as they were, are not capable of receiving new impressions of truth.

**(2) Charity
Necessary to
Spiritual Progress**

They needed to unbend, in the spirit of charity. The truth was important for Christ's disciples, to whom this impersonal statement of truth was immediately addressed. The truth applies to all men today.

The spiritual business of all men, and of spiritual leaders in a special way, is to conserve every motion for right in the hearts of men. This universal law, stated concretely, is found in these words: "Take heed to yourselves: if thy brother sin, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he sin against thee seven times in the day, and seven times turn again to thee, saying, 'I repent'; thou shalt forgive him." That is the law of constructive work in the Kingdom of Christ: for truth and grace are added to truth and grace. Gradually men rise from darkness into the light of truth. Slowly oftentimes, they add little by little to their spiritual attainment. The standards of truth are unalterable. But God is forgiving. Men must be charitable. So might God's truth find larger entrance into the hearts of men, and

Christ's Kingdom come, with its saving grace and power, in the world.⁸

These exalted standards of duty laid down by Christ on this occasion called forth from His Apostles a prayer for larger faith; and Christ, in answer to their prayer, gave them and others present the lesson on faith with which He closed His discourse at this time. "Lord, increase our faith," they asked. And the Lord said to them: "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye would say unto this sycamine tree, 'Be thou rooted up, and be thou planted in the sea'; and it would have obeyed you."

Faith, law, and limitless power, go hand in hand. The mustard seed grows in perfect accord with the laws of God, which govern its life. Faith that works in like manner may accomplish anything. It may command the resources of God, Whose power is limited in effectiveness only by defections from His laws, natural and spiritual. Effective faith works by a law-fulfilling love: for law and love, perfect in God, are inseparable from the exercises of His Divine power. Faith and obedience, a faith that obeys, is the condition of commanding the limitless power of God.⁹

There is a faith unto life, and a faith unto power. Both are the gift of God. But the deeper faith of power, for which the Apostles prayed at this time, is not the gift of a moment. Such faith grows through patient, humble, and faithful obedience. The higher endowments for which the Apostles asked do come as free gifts from God. The servant who had done his day's work, and then served his master at supper, had attained no special reward: he had only done his appointed duty. Even so men cannot buy up the higher gifts of God, not even by obedience. But by obeying, they do fulfill the conditions of those higher gifts. Having brought themselves into closer touch with God, more into line with His law, and deeper into the spirit of His love, men attain unto that faith which commands the resources of God's power. Faithfulness over the few things is the law by which men come at length to rule over many things.

⁸This truth, as here discussed by Christ, does not mean that the offended, before he shall forgive, may wait for motions of repentance on the part of the offender. Christ was here pointing out the duty of conserving every movement toward the right. That is a very different thing from the duty of an offended party to take the lead in righting a wrong which he has received. Both are duties of great solemnity and importance in the sight of God. Read *Matthew* 18:15-35, and the discussion in Chapter VIII. 185-189; IX, 200; and XIV, 338-342.

⁹Cf. *Matthew* 7:21, 24-27; *Galatians* 5:6, 13, 14; and *James* 2:17-26.

Again Christ came to a point of finality, having completed His appeal to the rulers of Israel. In these last words, which were

(3) **Way of Life
and Power: Gifts
of God**

spoken to the Disciples, but obviously meant for all, there was wisdom alike for the Apostles and for the enemies of Christ.

Duty is duty; and God looks upon the heart.

There He finds, or fails to find, the conditions that make it possible for Him to save and bless the life of man. The Apostles probably congratulated themselves while Jesus was thus dealing with the conditions of their enemies. Those enemies, the scribes and the Pharisees, had made a great display of outward performance. But God was looking into their hearts for the conditions that opened the way for Him to save and to bless them with the higher blessings of spiritual life.

The faith that saves comes from conviction in the mind and the heart, and expresses itself in the acceptance and confession of Christ as one's personal Savior. But that higher faith of power, the faith of assurance, the faith that sums up all blessedness, arises from a life of experience in doing the will of God. The very faith to forgive, for which the Apostles were especially asking at this time, comes from the act and experience of forgiving: for when men forgive, they have prepared the way for God to bestow upon them the power of still greater forgiveness.

This thought was a fitting close to Christ's appeal to the rulers of the Jews, in His attempt to save that once chosen people. Under the mistaken leadership of the scribes and the Pharisees, the Jews, as a people, and their rulers also, were not looking for life as a gift from God. They thought of it as a result of their own attainment. But Christ desired them to think clearly of attaining the conditions upon which God could bestow life and blessedness upon them. Life was a result of faith in Christ, and not of merely claiming to have attained, as did the Pharisees. The higher blessings of life resulted from actively obeying the will of God, and not from merely asking those higher gifts, as did the Apostles. Christ encouraged all men to believe in Himself as the Son of God sent to save the world, and to do the will of His Father in Heaven so that they might have life, and have it more abundantly.

IV. The Determination of the Jews to Put Jesus to Death

The response to these efforts of Christ to save Israel by His appeals to the rulers of the Jews was far from reasonable. For a long while the scribes and the Pharisees had been comparatively

quiet. This was not, however, because they appreciated the kindly spirit in which the Lord had appealed to them. On the contrary, they were probably busy all the while with deliberations which they would soon make public. An additional cause for their public inactivity was the fact that Jesus, during most of the period covered by this chapter, had been working in regions that were remote from the strong ecclesiastical center at Jerusalem. But the storm of opposition was gathering all the while; and it broke with all its force when Jesus next approached the Sacred City, which approach was in connection with the most notable of all His miracles.

The Raising of Lazarus from the Dead was an outstanding event in the Life-Work of the Son of God. That event occurred in Bethany, a suburb of Jerusalem, and was the occasion for the final decision of Christ's enemies to put Him to death. But this extraordinary event was more than merely an occasion for that far-reaching decision. There was a divine purpose in this miracle. That purpose was to manifest the glory of God, by giving, as it seems, an indisputable exhibition of the Divine Nature of Jesus Christ as the Son of God.

1. The Divine Purpose in the Raising of Lazarus. This divine purpose in the Raising of Lazarus was stated in considerable detail by Jesus Himself. While He was still ministering at some distance from Jerusalem, Jesus learned, by a message from the sisters of Lazarus, that he was sick. At once

**Raising of Lazarus
from the Dead**
John 11:1-54

**Glory of God,
and of His Son**
John 11:1-16

Jesus said to His Apostles: "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby." After staying yet two days where He was, Jesus said to the Apostles: "Let us go into Judea again." But the Apostles protested against this plan, lest the Jews should again try to stone Jesus. But He reassured the Apostles by reminding them that He Who walked in the light of truth had no reason to fear.

At length, Jesus said: "Our friend Lazarus is fallen asleep." When the Apostles failed to understand this figurative statement, Jesus explained literally that "Lazarus is dead." Then the Lord added: "And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him." The evident impression was that something unusual was to happen in connection with this death of Lazarus. The Apostles naturally thought of Christ's own death, which He had already foretold to them, and the thought of which had taken deep hold

upon their minds. Hence the melancholy Thomas said: "Let us also go, that we may die with Him." But Jesus foresaw results of Divine Glory, and not of death, in this journey to the sad home of His friends in Bethany.

2. *The Facts in the Raising of Lazarus.* The circumstances of this miracle are given in more elaborate detail than those of any other miracle performed by the Lord Jesus. The deliberation with which He came to the scene of sorrow has already been mentioned. The events, after He reached Bethany, seem to move with a solemnity of detail that emphasizes two central facts.

Two Central Facts
John 11:17-44

First, *Lazarus was dead.* The statement of Jesus to that effect; the assemblage of mourning Jews; the regretful complaints of the sisters, Martha and Mary; the sympathetic tears of Jesus; the sealed tomb; and the caution of Martha concerning the opening of the sealed tomb—all of these facts argue the certainty of real death in the case of Lazarus. About that fact, there could be no reasonable question; and about it there was no question raised, so far as is revealed in the record.

Second, *Jesus Christ was clothed here with the glory and the majesty of the Son of God.* The Lord's authoritative assurance to Martha: "Thy brother shall rise again"; the further assurance: "I am the Resurrection, and the Life"; the absolute certainty implied in His command: "Take ye away the stone"; the confidence of His reply to Martha's fear: "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou believedst, thou shouldest see the glory of God?"; the directness of Christ's prayer to His Father; and the final call of the dead to life again—all these facts argue conclusively that He who spake in this manner was fully conscious that He had in Himself the glory and the majesty and the power of the Son of God. This conclusion even His enemies seemed unable successfully to deny.

3. *The Results from the Raising of Lazarus.* The results of this miracle are definitely recorded. As usual, there was a division among those who were present. Many

General Results
John 11:45-54

of them, it is said, when they saw that which Jesus did, believed on Him. "But some of them (possibly spies) went away to the Pharisees, and told them the things which Jesus had done." The main interest centers, however, in the results of this event as related to the Lord Jesus, and to the Jews who were in opposition to Him.

The Chief Priests and the Pharisees, when they heard the report of this miracle, gathered a council, possibly an informal

meeting of the Sanhedrin, to consider what course of opposition to follow at this time. Before them was the indisputable fact of this

**1. Council of
Opposition to Jesus
John 11:47-53**

miracle. They were in great perplexity. "What do we?" they asked one another, "for this Man doeth many signs. If we let Him thus alone, all men will believe on Him; and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation."

But at that moment of deep concern, when the vacillating Pharisees were uncertain what to do, a brusque and wily Sadducee came to the rescue, with a definite purpose in mind. That Sadducee was none other than the imperious high priest, Caiaphas.

**Determination to
Destroy Jesus**

In a coarse, rough, blunt voice, he announced that the hesitating Pharisees were a set of dolts, knowing nothing at all. Then, with that pride of authority and blunt decisiveness which were characteristic of his imperious nature, Caiaphas announced a full-formed diabolical plan, that one man, meaning Jesus, should die for the people, and thus prevent the Romans from destroying the whole Jewish nation. All classes of Christ's enemies grasped this authoritative suggestion; and the final deadly purpose against Jesus was soon formed. "So from that day forth they took counsel that they might put Him to death."

The effect of this decision upon Jesus was equally definite. He knew all that had happened in the evil hearts of His enemies.

**2. Retirement of
Jesus from
Jerusalem
John 11:54**

He knew also the purpose of murder upon which they had agreed. The decision of this council marked, therefore, a new departure in the working plans of Jesus. The record states that "Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews, but departed thence in the country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim; and there He tarried with the disciples."

Thus at last the opposition to Jesus had crystallized into an authoritative and fixed purpose of death. "Therefore from that day they took counsel to slay Him." The advice of Caiaphas was followed; and that authority put the whole Jewish system back of this fell purpose. Previous to this decision, some minor courts, and some synagogues, had planned the ruin of Jesus; but from this time forth, there was a united, concerted purpose on the part of the rulers of the nation as a whole to destroy the Lord Jesus Christ. It was henceforth only a question, so far as they were concerned, of how they would be able to carry out their

murderous intentions. It is later recorded (*Luke 22:51*), to the credit of Joseph of Arimathea, and a few others perhaps, that they refused to consent to these evil intentions; but this minority was so small that it had no power to stop this plan of death here determined upon against the Son of God.

CHAPTER XVII

THE LORD'S LAST PUBLIC SUMMARY OF LIFE AND SERVICE

"The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy." *Zephaniah 3:17.*

"For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first and also to the Greek." *Romans 1:16.*

"But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." *Jude vv. 20-21.*

"Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the Temple of My God." *Revelation 3:11-12.*

This chapter covers the last part of what is commonly called "The Perean Ministry of Jesus." As stated in the previous chapter, when the Jews decided to destroy Jesus, He withdrew from Jerusalem "into a city called Ephraim; and there He tarried with His disciples." How long He remained there is uncertain. Possibly He made that "city" a temporary working center for most of the events of this chapter, which covers the time from the day He left Jerusalem until He returned to that City at the beginning of the Passion Week.

Therefore, speaking broadly, this season of final retirement from Jerusalem was the last period of Christ's Ministry that was strictly public. During this period He made short journeys in Judea, and in Samaria, and a longer one into Galilee, probably going to Capernaum, and possibly also to Nazareth. He also spent much of His time in the Province of Perea, beyond Jordan; wherefore this general part of His life-work is called "The Perean Ministry."

This period seems to have been one of comparative quiet. It was like a calm before the storm of the Passion Week. The Pharisees, however, did follow Jesus at this time, as will appear later in this chapter; and they asked Him a few designing questions. The common people also came to Him in great crowds, to see Him and to hear His teachings. But He was remote from the stirring centers of the Nation; and there were times during this period when the Lord was alone with the Twelve Apostles.

There are intimations in the records that only a few things of all that Jesus said and did during this period have been recorded. The selection of the events that are recorded was obviously made

for a definite purpose. There is, in the inner meaning of these events, a close logical relation. These records are thus inwardly built together into a comprehensive and practical survey of Gospel truth. They are, as a rule, teaching events, which set forth Christ's last public summary of life and service in His Kingdom.

I. Four Cardinal Facts about the Christian Life

In the first group of teaching events in this part of His ministry, Christ emphasized four cardinal truths about the Christian life.

1. *The Law of Gratitude.* The first of these facts was the law of gratitude, which, as Christ pointed out in His comment on the ten lepers who were healed, should always operate to the praise and glory of God, from Whom alone men receive temporal and spiritual blessings. The emphasis here given to this law was a matter of very great significance in its relation to the Kingdom and Glory of God.

**Healing of the
Ten Lepers
Luke 17:11-19**

This healing of the Ten Lepers probably occurred late in this period of retirement, possibly about the time that Jesus began His general course back toward Jerusalem. While He was then, as the record states, "on His way to Jerusalem," yet He must have been only in the initial stages of His return; for He "was passing through the midst of (or between) Samaria and Galilee," when this event took place.

**1. Facts of
the Healing**

At a certain village on the way, ten lepers, seeing Him passing by, stood afar off, and cried, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" And when Jesus saw them, He said to them, "Go and show yourselves unto the priests." This command of Jesus was in accord with the ancient law of Israel which constituted the priests the legal health officers of the several communities, to pass upon the cures from leprosy and other forms of contagious disease. The ten lepers obeyed the command of Jesus, and were all healed as they went on the way to the priest. Then one of the ten returned to give thanks to Christ for the blessing of restored health.

This one man who returned was a Samaritan. Jesus, when He saw this man returning alone to give thanks, wondered at the ingratitude of the other nine, saying, "Were not the ten cleansed? But where are the nine? Were there none found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger?" And then Christ said to this

**2. Christ's Lesson
of Gratitude**

grateful Samaritan, "Arise, and go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole."

The truth here announced is fundamental to right living. Common gratitude should be universal, and unforgotten. But deeper than that is the truth, that the goodness of God should lead to the glory of God. That is the truth that this incident stands for. The thought of what God and His Son have done for lost souls should stir every heart to repentance and praise. Hence the necessity of preaching the Gospel: the world must hear again the old, old story of Jesus and His love. Hence also the magnetic power of the Crucified Christ, Who, when lifted up, draws all men unto Himself. Christ, in this brief comment on the conduct of the ten lepers, gave expression to a first truth of love and life in the Kingdom of God. It is the simple law of gratitude, which leads to the praise and glory of God.

2. *The Spirituality of the Kingdom of God.* The next truth which Christ announced concerning the Christian life was an emphasis upon the spiritual nature of the Kingdom of God. This truth is one of very great importance. There is an easy tendency in life to act on other principles than those involved in this truth. Men have always been prone to forget that the Kingdom of Heaven is a thing of the inner spirit. The questions, therefore, of When, and How the Kingdom should come, involve the whole philosophy and theology of one's life.

**When and How the
Kingdom Comes**
Luke 17:20-37
and 18:1-8

This truth was called forth on this occasion by a question of the Pharisees. They desired to know, "when the Kingdom of God cometh." They were thinking of this coming of the Kingdom in terms of dates and external events. To correct their thoughts, Christ spoke these words in reply: "The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, 'Lo, here!' or, 'There!' for lo, the Kingdom of God is within you."

**1. Truth Called
Forth by the
Pharisees**
Luke 17:20-21

The Kingdom of God is a thing of the spirit: it is not a thing of external and spectacular results and demonstrations. The Kingdom is in the heart. The right manifestation of the Kingdom within is a supreme love, which looks up in grateful worship to God and His Son, and reaches out in sympathetic service to men. The Kingdom of God is an indwelling Christ, Whose Spirit permeates, controls, and sanctifies the whole life of man. It is not a thing of external show, except as the work of an inner transforming Spirit is seen in the principles and conduct of life. That

was the answer of Christ to this question of the Pharisees, who called forth this discussion.

After thus answering the Pharisees, Jesus, turning to His own Disciples, expounded this truth at greater length. Before the

Disciples of Christ, there were dark days.

2. Truth Expounded as Source of Hope to the Disciples Within a short time, as Christ well knew, there was to be an almost total temporary eclipse of the then visible Kingdom of Christ.

Luke 17:22-25 The King was to be smitten, and the citizens of the Kingdom should be scattered. In those dark days, the Disciples would long for the encouragement of these pre-Crucifixion days; but over their hearts there should hover only the dim light of an uncertainty which none could safely follow.

In Christ's thought there was also a reference to the trouble that lay in the path of the Church in its early history. Beyond these troublous days, He looked to a far-off day of great revelation: a day when the Light of Truth should strike, like lightning across the world. In that day the truth of Christ would be known, and His Kingdom even visibly triumphant in the world. But that time was not to come until after suffering: first, the suffering and death of Christ, with its stunning eclipse of faith and hope in the hearts of His followers; and later, the persecutions that should shut up the Kingdom of Christ in the secret hearts of men. In such days hope could survive only when faith looked steadfastly upon the things that are spiritual, when the soul took refuge in the Kingdom of the Spirit.

It is difficult to look steadfastly upon the spiritual. Men are prone to look for objective facts. They count "visible" results.

3. Truth Emphasized by Two Corollaries They long for concrete external encouragement. This tendency, allowable within certain limits, should never lay too great stress on external results; for the real things of the Kingdom are things of the spirit. This truth Christ laid anew upon the hearts of His Disciples by means of two corollaries which He drew from the general proposition of the spiritual nature of His Kingdom.

Men should work for spiritual objectives. That was Christ's first corollary. The failure to do that, as He pointed out, was the

(1) Working for Spiritual Objectives basic trouble with the ancient world, both in the days of Noah, and in the days of Lot. Men sought then only the worldly, the temporal, and the temporary. They failed both

Luke 17:26-37 to see and to seek after the spiritual, until the judgments of the spiritual had fallen upon their very souls.

"After the same manner shall it be in the day that the Son of Man is revealed." That will also be a day of judgments, for which men may be prepared only by living for the unseen things of the spirit. Like lightning, in its terrible sense, will then be the judgments of God. In that day, the philosophy of things,—of possession and of further gaining,—will utterly fail. The spiritual concerns of life will then be seen in their true light as supreme in life. The true measurement of life is spiritual. Men may have the same ease and occupation, showing no external differences. But the division lines of spiritual judgment shall separate them one from another. "Where, Lord?" asked the Disciples, desiring to know where this judgment should so fall upon men. By using a proverb then current, Christ suggested that wherever the facts and failures of life were, there the judgments of life would fall, according to the facts. For approval in spiritual things men must live for the things of the spirit.

In the second corollary, Christ insisted, with equal force, that men must have an active faith in God. Men "ought always to pray, and not to faint," said Christ. The unjust judge, who had neither fear of God nor regard for man, could yet be moved to grant a favor. The contrast here is that between the unfeeling judge and the loving care of the Heavenly Father, who will not fail. The argument is that men should live for the spiritual, whatever happens in the external world, knowing that all shall be well when life is thus placed in the hands of God. The Pharisees had asked "when the Kingdom of God cometh." Christ resolved that original question into another with which He closed His discourse on this subject.

That final question was one of faith in Christ. "Howbeit," He said, "when the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" That is the full answer: for when that is true, then the Kingdom of God has already come into the hearts and lives of men, and they shall know the fact without the need of being informed from external testimony. Two points therefore constitute the complete answer of Christ to the question of the Pharisees. First, "the Kingdom of God is within you." The coming of the Kingdom is the re-organizing of the life from within, through the grace of God in the heart. Second, the way to bring about the Kingdom is to have faith in Jesus Christ, and thus to devote the life to the service of God in the attainment of things spiritual.

**(2) Demand for an
Active Faith
Luke 18:1-8**

**Parable of the
Unjust Judge**

3. *The Spirit of Humility in Approaching God.* The third fact about the Christian life, which Christ set forth, was the spirit of humility with which men should always come into the presence of God. It is almost unthinkable that imperfect man would dare to approach God otherwise. But, alas, there are obvious facts too many to the contrary! The conceit, arrogance, and self-sufficiency of some men would lead them to dare any measure of boldness. The need of humility in the presence of God, and especially when one approaches Him in prayer, is the truth which Christ, in the following parable, laid upon the hearts of "certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and set all others at nought."

**Parable of the
Pharisee and the
Publican at
Prayers
Luke 18:9-14**

"Two men went up into the Temple to pray," said Christ, in this parable; "the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank Thee, that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I get.' But the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto Heaven, but smote his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a (the) sinner.' I say unto you," Christ said, "This man went down to his home justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Such was Christ's picture of an effective approach to God. The Christian ought always to pray; and the key to effective prayer is humility. Christ, in thus contrasting the Pharisee and the publican, probably intended to lay the pressure of this truth where it was then most needed; for the Pharisees were then singularly void of this cardinal virtue of spiritual life.

**2. An Effective
Approach to God**

But the truth is universal in its application. Humility is the key of success in prayer, because it brings the soul before God in such a manner and spirit as to make it possible for God to bestow a blessing. The Pharisee measured himself by other men, and so felt a paralyzing self-satisfaction. He looked down upon other men, and so closed the channels of grace to and from his own soul. But the publican looked in upon his own life, and that view of himself drove him to seek the mercy of God. The publican measured his life by the standards of God, and stood,

as here pictured, abashed in the presence of God. An humble spirit is justified before God: for such a spirit the Lord can bless.

4. *The Insistence upon Divine Standards in Social Life.* God's laws must be observed in social life. Christ insisted that those

**Divorce, and
Social Evils**
Matthew 19:3-12
Mark 10:2-12

laws which God has established are the only true standard and basis of human society. The discussion at this time turned upon a question of divorce; but in answering that question, Christ set forth an underlying principle which He obviously intended to have a general application in life. Throughout the discourse, He argued that Christianity requires all the relationships of social life to be fully up to the standards of God's laws.

This discourse was called forth by the Pharisees. They introduced a question about divorce, hoping that they might be able to

**1. Question by the
Pharisees—Their
Motives**
Matthew 19:3
Mark 10:2

entrap Jesus in His teachings on that subject. All the Jews of that day agreed that divorces were permissible, but there was a difference of opinion as to the rigor with which this permission should be regulated.

The party that followed Hillel contended for a lax application of the law, and would grant divorces for many and easy causes. The party of Schammai, who led the opposing faction, insisted upon a strict application of the law, limiting the grounds of divorce to questions of chastity and marriage infidelity. In the meshes of this raging controversy the Pharisees hoped that Jesus would entangle Himself while attempting to answer the question which they had asked.

But the Pharisees had other motives for raising this particular question. They hoped that Jesus would, in His discussion, overreach the provisions of the Mosaic Law, as it was traditionally understood, and thus bring Himself under popular and ecclesiastical judgment. Refusing to recognize Christ as divine, they failed at this point to reckon even with the possibility that the Son of God would brush away all of their superficial traditions, and give an authoritative interpretation of this law.

There is little doubt that the Pharisees had also another motive, which, as they thought, was safely hid away in their own cunning hearts. They hoped that Jesus, in His discussion of the subject of divorce, would bring Himself into collision with the wrath of Herod Antipas, as John the Baptist had done, and that the results would be the same with Jesus as with John.¹ With

¹For this clash between John and Herod, see Chapter XI, page 250.

these several purposes in mind, the Pharisees asked Jesus, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?" The very wording of this question was designed to provoke an entangling discussion.

But the Son of God was not to be thus entrapped between the two schools of Jewish thought respecting the question of divorce.

**2. Christ's Method
of Making Reply**
Matthew 19:4-9
Mark 10:3-9

Neither was He to be led by this discussion into a collision with King Herod. The method of Christ's reply to the Pharisees was definite, and beyond appeal. He fully recognized the standard and authority of the

Mosaic Law, and then He checked up and interpreted the Mosaic Law in its right relation to the more fundamental law of God's original purpose respecting man and woman. Following this plan of reply, Jesus taught, with freshness and divine authority, the first great law of God respecting marriage and divorce.

What was that law? First, Christ challenged His questioners to recite the law of Moses on this subject. This they did, saying

**3. God's Law of
Marriage and of
Divorce**
Matthew 19:4-9
Mark 10:3-9

that Moses "suffered to write a bill of divorcement," and so to put away an undesired and undesirable wife. But the Son of God was not satisfied with that traditional statement of this important law. Through that adaption of the law men had lost the right

perspective on this fundamental social relation in life. In order therefore to make all thought clear, Jesus, following the natural method of One Who was Himself Divine, went back beyond the Mosaic statute here announced by the Pharisees, to God's original conception of man and woman, for the true law on the subject of marriage and divorce.²

Referring thus to the basic truth on this subject, Christ gave this statement of Divine authority on the law of marriage and divorce. "Have ye not read," He asked the Pharisees, "that He which made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the twain shall become one flesh'? What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder."

That, then, is the true law of marriage, from which, as the

²It is well worthy of note that both Jesus and Paul, when dealing with the question of marriage and divorce, did, as a rule, if not always in fact, go back to God's original thought in the creation of man and woman, as the only right angle from which rightly to consider this sacred relation of life. *Genesis* 1:26-28; 2:18-25. *1. Corinthians* 5:1-11:16. Compare also Chapter VII, pages 177-180; and Chapter XVI, page 401.

divine standard of this social relation, there is no deviation in the thought of God. Marriage, as God intended it, is a sacred relationship between one man and one woman, and that sacred union is not to be broken. On the high level of God's thoughts, and that is the ultimate law on the subject, there is no polygamy, and no divorces (except as noted below), and no action of divorce courts in severing the marriage relations: for modern courts overreach their authority when they do more than ascertain the facts of that sin which breaks this sacred bond, and then define the status of those who have thus broken it. God's law on this subject is very definite, and very explicit, perhaps more clearly defined, in fact, than that on any other question of social life. It is high, because it is worthy of God. It is also right absolutely, because it is an expression of divine wisdom which was built into the foundations of all marriage relations.

When Christ thus elevated this standard of social life to the level of God's original thought of the marriage relation, He

**(1) The Mosaic
Concession**

raised a very natural question, which is likely already in the mind of the reader. The Pharisees, at that time, asked that question in these

words: "Why then did Moses command to give a bill of divorce-ment, and to put her away?"³

In the beginning of His answer to this question, Jesus made this statement: "Moses for your hardness of heart suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it hath not been so." That was a correction of their common thought. This "statute" of Moses was not a command, as they had supposed. It was merely a *concession* to Israel, probably educative in its purposes, because their standards were still low. It was also a temporary expedient, to defend society by regulating life even on a lower level, so as to prevent many possible evils and to make better things possible to society as a whole. Christ affirmed that this social practice was pitched on a far lower moral level than that which God had ordained for men. It was a temporary concession by Moses to meet an unapproved social condition.

But that was not the true law of God, and not the standard which the Kingdom of Christ insisted upon for the marriage relation. That higher law of God was that which Christ re-affirmed in the following words, contrasting it with the concession of Moses: "But from the beginning it hath not

³Deuteronomy 24:1-4. The study of this passage, as it was interpreted on this occasion by the Lord Jesus, is highly illuminating on the absoluteness of the marriage law.

been so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery."

That is God's law on marriage and divorce. It is the law of Christ's Kingdom. It is the law of Christian living. It is the only adequate law of the world. The one permissible ground for divorce is that one sin which in its very nature breaks the marriage bond. Apart from that sin, according to these words of Christ, the marriage bond may not be broken. To dissolve it, as is done in the lax divorce courts of the land, and then for the divorced parties to go, as they usually do, and marry other men and women, is for all parties so concerned to live in adultery: it is an abomination before the Lord.

That is God's law on the subject of marriage and divorce, as it was here declared and explained by the Son of God Himself. Let the thoughtless, and guilty world, read this law aright, and then stand in awe of what God has made so plain that none can misunderstand. Never since the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, perhaps, has the world had such need of giving attention to these solemnizing thoughts of the Son of God. The Roman Empire rotted morally at this very point of her social structure, and so she fell to pieces. So may America, if she heed not this law of God!

These words sank deep into the hearts of the Apostles. When they had later entered into the house, "the disciples" (probably the Apostles) asked Jesus privately about this view of the law, which was evidently a new conception in their minds. Again the Lord Jesus stated the law, as previously given in public, and re-affirmed the immoral consequences that follow from unwarranted divorces that are followed by other marriages.

About this law, as here set forth by Christ, there can be no misunderstanding; and the law which He explained, as will be observed with interest, He made equally applicable to men and to women. In the eyes of God, there is but one law of marriage, and but one application of that law in the right relations between man and woman.

**Christ Condemns
All Divorces**

In these words the Son of God condemned all divorces. The Apostles so understood His meaning: for they knew that the one offense for which Christ would allow a divorce should never be

committed. This understanding by the Apostles led them to ask, in substance, this further question: "If wedlock is thus unbreakable, would it not be better not to marry at all?" In His reply, Jesus took into account three things.

The law of the marriage bond is one thing. The personal obligation to enter into that bond is a different thing. And the possibility of entering it is still a third thing. Christ here confirmed the provision, which God's law has always recognized, that real marriage is impossible, and does not exist, when those engaging themselves therein are essentially incompetent. This is true whether the defect be one of nature, or one otherwise brought about. Such people cannot really marry, in the sense that is contemplated as fundamental in the law of God on this subject; and His law has always recognized, as Christ did at this time, the right of an immediate separation in such cases. But that is the law of non-marriage, rather than of marriage.

Christ maintained here an interesting silence on the question of a personal obligation to marry. Perhaps He desired in this way to raise His discussion above a certain pettiness which He may have detected in the question which the Apostles had asked Him. But this He did say about the law of marriage: "He that is able to receive it, let him receive it." These were His last words, and His meaning therein was definite. He did not say that any person must, or should marry; but He did insist that the law of marriage, as previously discussed by Him, must be observed by all who do enter into the sacred relation of husband and wife.

Thus the Son of God expounded the law of marriage and divorce. He gave the world of His day a new conception of this sacred relation which lies at the foundation of all human society. This exalted conception is even yet lamentably unapplied, and for this failure modern society is, in many places, in danger of moral disintegration.

**Divine Standards
Set up in This
Discussion**

But there is a more general significance to this discussion of the Lord Jesus, which should not be ignored. In order to get at the true law of marriage, He referred this law to an ultimate authority in the original conception of God, which antedates all human enactments. This fact gives a principle by which to interpret the standards of life. By doing as He did here, Christ showed that all society, as re-organized under the influences of his Kingdom, must measure up to the perfect standards of God. Life, individual and social, must answer to God's thoughts, which

are perfect, instead of to the compromising standards of men. This is here seen to be true of marriage. It is also true of all other matters wherein life may, and must, answer to the laws of God.

II. Four Truths about Entering the Kingdom of Christ

The next series of four events in this period of retirement are concerned with the general question of entering the Kingdom of Christ. In the four truths thus set forth Christ spoke of the qualifications and conditions which make an entrance possible, and of certain conditions which make an entrance very difficult for individuals and classes of people.

I. Entrance to the Kingdom Possible to Those Having the Child-Like Spirit. In the first of the events recorded in this

**Christ Blessing the
Little Children**
Matthew 19:13-15
Mark 10:13-16
Luke 18:15-17

series, Jesus taught, in a very effective manner, that an entrance to the Kingdom of God was possible only to those who approached the Kingdom in the spirit of the little child. This truth He set forth in connection with His blessing the Children who were brought

to Him.

"Then were brought unto Him little children, that He should lay His hands on them, and pray." Evidently there was a popular desire for such a benediction from the Lord. Possibly there had developed a crowding condition which appeared to the Apostles to be an intrusion upon the work of their Master. For this, or other reason, the Apostles rebuked the parents who had brought their children to the Lord Jesus.

"But when Jesus saw it, He was moved with indignation, and said unto them, 'Suffer the little children to come unto Me;

**2. Exalting the
Child-Like Spirit** forbid them not: for of such is the Kingdom of God.'" After defending the children and their parents thus against the mistaken zeal

of the Apostles, Jesus used this situation to emphasize an important truth. "Verily I say unto you," He said, "Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein." Probably He discussed this truth at some length; but the record only adds, that "He took them (the children) in His arms, and blessed them, laying His hands upon them." And having done that, He departed from that place, gradually working His way toward Jerusalem, which, however, was still a long way off.

2. *Entrance to the Kingdom Prevented by a Lack of Supreme Devotion.* The Kingdom may be entered by one who has the child-like spirit of humility and confidence.

**Story of the Rich
Young Ruler**

Matthew 19:16-22

Mark 10:17-22

Luke 18:18-23

But the Kingdom of God may not be entered by one who is lacking in a supreme devotion to God, and to Christ, and to the things of the Spirit. This is the truth which Christ taught in and through the story of the Rich

Young Ruler, who came to the Lord, and asked the way of eternal life.

The first part of this story emphasized the legal status of the Rich Young Ruler. This status was respectable enough in itself,

1. Legal Status

—Ineffectual

Matthew 19:16-20

Mark 10:17-20

Luke 18:18-21

but not adequate as an answer to the question which the young man had asked. He approached Christ as "Good Master (or Teacher)," seeming thus to consider Christ only as a *man*. From that point of view, the questioner was readily informed that none

was worthy to be called *good* except God alone. That statement, rightly understood, fully assured the Young Man that he could *do* nothing that would enable him "to inherit eternal life."

Life, on its legal side, could come only from absolute righteousness. Hence Christ said, "If thou wouldst enter into life, keep the commandments." This suggestion

Wages of Sin

vs.

Gift of God

showed that the Young Ruler had his hope set upon his legal status before God; for he began at once to ask which commandments

were thus enjoined. In a way that was further suggestive, Jesus pointed to the second part of the Decalogue, adding thereto the summarizing law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." This last was added to help the Young Ruler to see the principle of inner heart-devotion necessary in moral life if a man would meet his duties even to his fellowmen, to say nothing of his higher duties to his God and Savior. But the Young Ruler failed to see the truth suggested. He insisted, instead, that his legal status was good, since he had observed all these laws from his youth up. Evidently he was sincere: for "Jesus looking upon him loved him." His attainments doubtless were excellent; but he had yet to learn that life eternal comes on other conditions.

The Young Ruler did not know himself. He did not know the requirements of divine law. He did not know the condition of eternal life. He did not see the truth which Christ had twice suggested. Deeper reaching treatment was yet necessary. Jesus

saw the difficulty, and said, "If thou wouldst be perfect (note the legal status again), go, sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven: and come, follow Me." Before that test of his supreme devotion he failed. "His countenance fell at the saying, and he went away sorrowful: for he was one that had great possessions."

2. Test of Supreme Devotion—Failure
Matthew 19:21-22
Mark 10:21-22
Luke 18:22-23

Life results from love rightly bestowed. This Young Ruler imagined that he had done his full duty to men; yet this test showed that he loved money more than he loved men. A test of the first part of the Decalogue would have showed the same failure respecting his service and love toward God. He could not buy up the treasures of Heaven with his gifts of charity. Neither could he attain those treasures of Heaven without that sacrificing love which puts God, and men, and service, first, and always first, in one's deepest heart. Presuming to stand on the law, this Young Ruler had not learned the first principle of all law. Seeming to seek after life, he erected mountains of gold between himself and the Door of Life. Following the sorrowful affection of his heart for earthly possessions, he walked away from Life, into the world of things—and eternal death.

3. Entrance to the Kingdom is Difficult to Those Who Are Rich. Money is a dangerous thing. It may close the doors of Heaven against a man's soul. That was the thought which arose in the mind of Christ during His interview with the Rich Young Ruler. No sooner had he gone sorrowfully away, than Jesus said to His Disciples, "Verily I say unto you, It is hard for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven."

Dangers of Money
Matthew 19:23-30
Mark 10:23-31
Luke 18:24-30

The Disciples were amazed at this saying. Then Jesus explained that the difficulty with the rich arose from the trust that the rich place in their riches. The fact of danger, however, He further insisted upon, saying, "It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God." At this saying the Disciples were astonished exceedingly, and asked, "Who then can be saved?" Jesus looking upon them said, "With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible." Only the grace of God can save the rich. There is here a possible suggestion that, in some cases at least, a special

1. Difficulty of Saving the Rich

providence, or special dispensation of grace, is necessary to reach and save those who put their trust in riches.

There is a similar danger in the seeking of rewards of service, as if God dispensed the rewards of His grace over the bargain counters. The question of Peter was perfectly natural at this time. Jesus had said that the Rich Young Ruler should sell all, and then follow Jesus. The Lord Jesus had solemnly commented on the fearful consequences of the Young Ruler's failure. But the Apostles had measured up to that exact test. Very naturally, therefore, Peter asked, "Lo, we have left all, and followed Thee; what then shall we have?"

**2. Dangers in
Seeking Rewards**
Matthew 19:27-30
Mark 10:28-31
Luke 18:28-30

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the Apostles had measured up to that exact test. Very naturally, therefore, Peter asked, "Lo, we have left all, and followed Thee; what then shall we have?"

In answering this question, Jesus very carefully stated three separate points, two of assurance, and one of warning. He assured the Apostles that they should have distinguished rewards for their special services. "Ye who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Then Christ assured them that every person who had given himself in complete devotion to Christ should, in this life, so exalt and universalize his spirit as to gain far more than he had given up, and in the world to come he should inherit eternal life.

But there are even here dangers: the dangers of commercialism in service, and of an ostentatious estimate of one's own merit. Hence the warning with which Christ closed this part of His instruction. He urged upon His followers a becoming humility, reminding them that "many shall be last that are first; and first that are last." Perhaps the Apostles themselves, even at that time, needed this suggestion for humility, as well as the assurances which He had previously given.

4. Entrance to the Kingdom a Matter of Covenanted Grace.
Service is important, and necessary. But in the last analysis,

**Parable of the
Labourers in the
Vineyard**
Matthew 20:1-16

acceptance with God rests upon something in life that is deeper than the amount of service one may have rendered. This deeper condition of acceptance Christ taught in the Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard,

which He used to illustrate how the last may be first, and the first last.

The Kingdom, in this respect, is like a householder who went out to hire labourers for his vineyard. Early in the morning

he hired a man for a penny for the day. Again he went out about nine o'clock, in modern time, and again at twelve o'clock, and again at three, hiring men at each hour, and

**1. Facts of
the Parable**

promising them "whatever is right." These all he sent into the vineyard. At five o'clock he sent others there also, without promising them any pay at all.

When evening was come, the householder settled with all of his labourers, beginning with the last, and paying them all the same amount. When he paid those who had been hired early in the morning, they protested their right to more than the others had received. But the householder answered their protests with a refusal. He explained that what these labourers had received as the right of bargain, those hired later in the day had received from the rights of his own free will. The right was there in either case; but in the different cases the right arose from different sources.

So it is with the Kingdom of God, which comes to men through the covenanted grace of God. In the parable, the first men hired

**2. Meaning of
the Parable**

represent those who would try to attain eternal life on the basis of merit in themselves. On this basis, they must fill up the full day's work; and even then, were it possible for them to fill up the full measure of merit, they only receive the rewards of eternal life. Two dangers lurk here. Men may think that the Kingdom is to be attained (only) in this way. They may also put an unwarranted, soul-blinding value upon their own attainments.

The present parable was spoken to fortify men against these possible errors, and the evils that would follow from these errors. In this parable, they all worked, and all had the same results, regardless of the time spent in labour. That is the central point of the story. What some had as the pay for the day, others had from the free will of the householder. So it is with the gift of eternal life. If one could merit the full reward of life, he would have only what God has covenanted to give to all as the free gift of His love. That is the central meaning of this parable.

Acceptance with God turns upon the fact of response to Him. That is the determining fact: for the spirit of responsiveness shows that deeper love in the heart, from which all true obedience and service have their origin. Eternal life is a gift of God's infinite and covenanted grace. He gives that gift to men when they respond to His call for love and faith; and they receive this gift

the sooner who concern themselves most about their response, and then leave the results entirely in the hands of God. Such is the truth which Christ has exemplified in this parable. Men must labour; but the entrance to the Kingdom, and the blessings thereof, are the free gifts of God's covenanted grace.

III. Two Bases of Salvation

There are two bases of eternal life, the divine, and the human. The previous teachings of Christ led naturally and logically to a consideration of this general truth as the next topic for record and study in the Gospel.

I. The Divine Basis of Eternal Life. On the Divine side, the central thing in God's plan for saving the world is the Death and Resurrection of His Son Jesus Christ. These events, at that time, lay in the near future. Jesus began, therefore, to bring them anew before the minds of the Apostles. He did so in the following prophetic narrative, which evidently caused great agitation among those who were personally near to the Lord Jesus.

**Death and
Resurrection of
Christ**

Matthew 20:17-19

Mark 10:32-34

Luke 18:31-34

The record is this. "And they were in the way, going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus was going before them: and they were amazed; and they that followed were afraid. **1. Christ's Prophecy of His Death and Resurrection** And He took again the Twelve, and began to tell them the things that were to happen unto Him, saying, 'Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man shall be delivered unto the chief priests and the scribes; and they shall condemn Him to death, and shall deliver Him unto the Gentiles: and they shall mock Him, and shall spit upon Him, and shall scourge Him, and shall kill Him; and after three days He shall rise again'."

The substance of this record is clear and definite. A few things, however, may be observed. Jesus was still on His way to Jerusalem, where He was soon to be crucified. The people who followed Jesus were much concerned in His course at this time.

**2. Observations
on This Record**

Evidently there had developed an expectation that something unusual was about to happen. That feeling was general, as the reflection of it from the next event will fully testify. But Jesus turned away from the common crowd, and delivered the central message of this prophecy in private to the Apostles. He told them, in detail, what should happen, and how it should happen,

in connection with His Death and Resurrection. Upon this latter event He threw more emphasis than He had ever done before. But these things, which now seem perfectly clear in the light of their fulfillment, were not then understood by the Apostles.

2. *The Human Basis of Realizing Eternal Life.* Salvation is a matter of grace. "The Gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Yet the degree to which one realizes the fullness of life that is possible to an individual is largely a matter of human and personal responsibility. This realization of life, and in truth all exaltation of the individual in the Kingdom of Christ, must come as the result of service. That was the truth which Christ taught His Disciples, in answer to the ambitious request of James and John for high places in His Kingdom.

Exaltation of
Self by Service
Matthew 20:20-28
Mark 10:35-45

These sons of Zebedee came, with their mother, to Jesus. Evidently they were expecting some great culminating event in the career of Christ when He should arrive at Jerusalem; and in connection with that thought, no doubt, the aspirations of these sons had been talked over within the family circle. Following plans that were probably fully agreed upon, the mother and the sons approached Jesus with their request. Probably her part in the incident was due to the highly personal nature of the question which they wished to ask of the Lord. Gradually they approached their Master, as if to feel out His attitude before presenting their full petition.

1. An Ambitious
Request
Matthew 20:20-21
Mark 10:35-37

Probably the mother actually made the request, as suggested by Matthew, who quoted her in these words: "Command that these my two sons may sit, one on Thy right hand, and one on Thy left hand, in Thy Kingdom." That was the desire which both the mother and the sons had in their hearts.

But that was an impossible request, as Jesus began at once to explain to them. They did not know, He said, what their request involved. It meant, first, that they must be accounted worthy of His exaltation in point of obedience. He raised a question as to whether they were prepared for that degree of obedience, with all the sacrifice and suffering which it involved. But they, perhaps already feeling the challenge in His words, agreed that they were able to meet that test. About this point He argued no farther, but appeared rather to agree with their own lofty reply.

2. An Impossible
Request
Matthew 20:22-23
Mark 10:38-40

He knew that they would have sufficient testing for complete self-revelation. For the present, He desired to lead into another deeper truth. He desired them to learn that such rewards as that which they had requested are not dispensed in His Kingdom as matters of mere gift. They belong rather to the realization side of spiritual life, and come therefore to the individual as the results of a built-up experience in grace and service. Such awards come by the fixed laws of God. They are thus prepared of the Father for those who build themselves effectively into the plans of grace: for of those plans, such awards are a part. The two Apostles were therefore going about in the wrong way to attain the thing which they had desired and requested of the Lord Jesus.

The request was therefore unwarranted. The other ten Apostles saw this point, or at least felt the emotional conclusion of the

3. An Unwarranted Request

Matthew 20:24-28

Mark 10:39-45

situation, and were indignant at James and John. But Jesus called them all to Himself, and cleared their thought on the underlying principles involved in this request. He explained that all exaltation in His Kingdom results from service, and not from mere place and conferred powers. The worldly ideal was very different. In worldly thought, exaltation has always been measured in terms of place and power. In worldly experience, exaltation has always expressed itself through lordships, condescensions, and tyrannies. Christ appealed to the common knowledge of the Apostles concerning this universal way of the unchristian world.

But in His Kingdom, the ideals were very different: the laws of exaltation were, in fact, exactly opposite to those of the world. In His Kingdom, service determines the result. "But it is not so among you," Christ said to the Apostles: "but whosoever would become great among you shall be your servant: and whosoever would be first among you shall be servant of all." Then pointing to the ideal application of this truth in His own person, He added, "For verily the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." Like their Lord and Savior, His followers must both serve, and also pay the price of service, if they would attain an exaltation within His Kingdom.

The Lord Jesus, in this last quotation, pointed again to His own Cross, thus effectively summarizing in one statement the two bases of salvation. While showing others their responsibility in the world of service, His thoughts rose to the One Supreme Example of all that He meant, in His own service unto death,

which alone made all other efforts possible. There is here the full circle of divine grace and human endeavor, together working out the blessedness of everlasting life.

IV. Four Working Principles of Christian Grace.

Finally, in this period of retirement, there are four events recorded in the Life-Work of Jesus which illustrate certain working principles of Christian grace. The exposition of these principles follows logically at this point, after the discussion of the two bases of the saved life in the last foregoing section. These four principles are concerned with Faith, the Re-actions of the Changed Life, Membership and Service in the Kingdom, and the Supremacy of Love in a Saved Life.

I. Blessings according to Faith. The first of these working principles of grace may be stated thus: The working of grace in blessing a life is according to the faith that opens the way for the blessing. This was not a new truth in the teachings of Jesus.⁴ He repeated the truth here, at the healing of blind Bartimaeus and others, first, for its own sake, and further, because the occasion was one in which Christ could impress this important truth upon the hearts of the great multitude who were present at that time.

Healing of Blind
Bartimaeus and
Others
Matthew 20:29-34
Mark 10:46-52
Luke 18:35-43

The place of this healing was near the City of Jericho. It is evident that Jesus, in His general course toward Jerusalem, had paused at Jericho; and, from that city as a center, the Lord had gone out for a time in short tours of healing and teaching ministry into the regions round about. On one of these journeys out from the city, or possibly as the Lord was returning from such a journey, a great multitude followed Him. From all that may have happened in that multitude, the story of blind Bartimaeus alone has been recorded.

1. Place of the
Healing: Jericho

According to Luke's account, as Jesus drew nigh unto the city, "a certain blind man sat by the wayside begging": and hearing a multitude going by, he inquired what this meant. And they told him that 'Jesus of Nazareth passeth by.' When blind Bartimaeus had learned that Jesus was thus near, he cried out, saying, "Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me!" The people were displeased with this cry, and rebuked the blind man for his appeal.

⁴For a previous statement of this truth, see Chapter XI, pages 232-240.

But he heeded them not, crying out a great deal more than before, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on me!" The story thus far gives the setting of the miracle that was to follow, in the healing of this man who cried so pathetically to the Lord for help.

Hearing this man cry in his distress, Jesus stopped, and commanded that the man be called. The people, seeing the compassion of Jesus, quickly changed their attitude toward Bartimaeus. Sympathetically they now said to him, "Rise, He calleth thee." Thus encouraged, Bartimaeus hurried to Jesus, Who asked, "what wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" And the blind man said, "Rabboni, that I may receive my sight!" Upon hearing this petition, Jesus touched the man's eyes, and said, "Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole." Luke adds the introductory command, "Receive thy sight." The miracle was an application of divine grace in response to faith in a human heart.

The healing was instant, as all the Gospel writers agree. Bartimaeus and the other blind man who was healed followed Jesus. Luke adds that Bartimaeus glorified God for this miracle; and "all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God." Mark and Luke agree in quoting the words of Jesus, to the effect that this miracle resulted from the faith that was exercised by Bartimaeus (and by inference, by the other also). The miracle altogether made a deep general impression.

The faith of Bartimaeus must have been extraordinary for one in his condition. He addressed Jesus in His essential historical character, as the Son of David. The very nature of this appeal to Jesus involved a recognition of His divine character, as did also the address that is given by Matthew. Bartimaeus seems to have known a great deal about Jesus. However, there is another possibility, which does not discount the quality of his own faith. He may have voiced the common conviction respect-

5A brief comparison of the parallel accounts of this incident of healing is not without interest. Luke speaks of "a certain blind man" who "sat by the wayside begging." Mark speaks of one beggar, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaues, as one who was either well known then, or soon became so after this miracle. Matthew says that there were two such beggars, who were healed on this occasion. These differences, which do not contradict one another at all, may be accounted for in this way. Bartimaeus may have spoken for the group of two beggars. In that case there would have been free choice in the method of narration, as between that of Matthew and that of Mark and Luke. Again, the fact that Bartimaeus seems to have been the better known, and possibly the more conspicuous in this incident, would have accounted for the differences. There is no contradiction, but only a difference in method of telling the same thing.

ing Jesus on the part of the people. They believed Him to be both the Son of David and the Son of God.

Possibly it was this discernment of faith, in part at least, that gave rise to the recording of this event: for there is a fine dramatic fitness in this summary of faith, at this time, in the two essential natures of Christ. He is still popular, on the very eve of His last great conflict with His enemies; and in spite of all their efforts to the contrary, the people, who are still unprejudiced, still believe in Him. Furthermore, in as far as the record arose from this wider impersonal interest in the faith of these men, there is complete accord between the record of Mark and Luke and that of Matthew, who does explicitly quote Christ as emphasizing the function of faith in the healing of this man, or these men.

2. *Responses of Grace in a Changed Life.* The general truth of the previous incident is plain. The blessing of life begins with faith. The proper outworking of faith should appear in a changed life. This additional truth of grace is that which was exhibited from the transforming touch of the Lord Jesus Christ upon the personal life of Zacchaeus.

Salvation of
Zacchaeus
Luke 19:1-10

The incident occurred at Jericho, at a time when Jesus was passing through that city. Zacchaeus, a rich publican, was the tax-collector of that city. He desired to see Jesus, Who was in great public favor at that time in those regions. Zacchaeus went forward, therefore, and climbed a sycamore tree, hoping thus to see the Lord. When Jesus came near, and saw this interest, He said to Zacchaeus, "Make haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house." He hastily came down, and received the Lord with great joy.

1. Meeting of Jesus
and Zacchaeus

That joyful reception was the beginning of a new life for Zacchaeus. He gave a definite point of contact for saving grace to touch his own soul. He was also responsive to that grace. He became liberal and generous in his social attitude. He did not resent the highly personal resentment of the people, that Jesus should thus "lodge with a man that is a sinner." Instead of that, Zacchaeus showed how effectively saving grace can express itself in transforming life. He stood, and said to Jesus, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have wrongfully exacted aught of any man, I restore fourfold." Under the in-

2. Re-Actions of
Grace in Zacchaeus

fluence of grace, this despised publican was ready to help those who were even then reviling him.

Jesus, when He saw that spirit manifested by Zacchaeus, was ready to reciprocate with divine assurance, and to defend

3. Assurances of Grace from Jesus Zacchaeus as one now worthy of a place among those who, through faith, have become children of God. "To-day," said Jesus, "is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham." Furthermore, "the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost." Zacchaeus, in his response, had become the proper fruitage of Christ's deepest purposes of grace and life. Being a saved and changed man, Zacchaeus was, in kind at least, a perfect work of grace. He was therefore, as he now appeared, himself a complete answer to the revilings of the unsympathetic multitude who had objected to the Lord's lodging with this man that was a sinner.

3. Membership and Service in the Kingdom of Christ. The law of saving grace makes another inflexible demand upon the

Parable of the Pounds
Luke 19:11-28

Christian. In order to be acceptable to God, the saved life, the changed life as seen in Zacchaeus, must have membership in the Kingdom of Christ. The Christian must acknowledge Christ as King, and become a willing citizen in Christ's Kingdom. More than that is also required. The Christian must live an active fruitful life in the Kingdom of Christ. Christ is Savior, and King, and Judge of life; and nothing short of these requirements can, or will, satisfy Him. That is the underlying truth in the Parable of the Pounds, which suggests also that the awards of the Kingdom are to be commensurate with the fruitfulness of the citizens of Christ's Kingdom.

The purpose of this parable was to clarify the thoughts of men respecting the Kingdom of Christ. The parable was spoken at

1. Purpose of the Parable
Luke 19:11

Jericho, perhaps on the eve of Christ's final departure for Jerusalem, since it is suggested that "He was nigh to Jerusalem." The expectation of the people had taken definite form, and "they supposed that the Kingdom of God was immediately to appear." In order to give the definite instructions needed at this time, Jesus spoke this parable to the people who had witnessed His interview with Zacchaeus. The Parable of the Pounds has two parts, separable and distinct in themselves, which merge, in their deeper meaning, into the one great final truth of the parable.

The first part of this parable is its frame-work. The Nobleman, about whom the story is told, went away to secure his kingdom but his citizens refused to have him rule over them. This was familiar talk to the inhabitants of Jericho: for both King Herod and Archelaus had, in those days, literally gone from that city to Rome to secure their sovereignty, and the people had protested to Rome against these kings. That is the frame-work of this parable.

This part of the parable has its distinct application, which is in close relation to that which is to follow. In this larger outline, the Nobleman signifies Christ. The protesting citizens are the Jews, who were, as a nation, bent upon the rejection of Christ as their King. The destruction of these citizens, in the end of the parable, signifies the impending judgments of God, first, in the national calamities which Christ foresaw as already overhanging that country, and finally, in the spiritual doom of their immortal souls, which Christ foresaw to be the result of their rejection of Him as their Lord and Savior. The general truth of this frame-work of the parable is that men find dependable safety (the only true safety, in fact), for themselves individually, and for society as a whole, in the acceptance of Christ, and in the willing obedience to the laws of His Kingdom.

The second part of the parable is the central part of the story. This part refers to those Christians who are already within the Kingdom. The "servants" in the parable were given one pound each, and commanded to trade with that pound until the King should return. The King, when he had returned, wanted to know what each servant had gained by the use of his pound. This was the test. The King found one servant to be worthy of authority over ten cities, and another worthy of five cities. That was all favorable, except that the five-pound man was not approved as *good*; nor was his work commended as *well done*. Possibly there was an intended suggestion that this man might have done better; yet what he had done was generously rewarded.

But the King, in his reckoning, found one servant who had gained nothing. He had not used his pound. For fear, he said, he had hid away his lord's money for safe-keeping. Christ's exactions are of law: His rewards are of grace. He demands a return for His pound; but He gives a city for each pound that is gained.

2. Frame-Work of the Parable
Luke 19:12, 14, 27

3. Central Part of the Parable
Luke 19:12-26

Failure of the One-Pound Servant

This man, however, feared the law, and did not trust the grace. Hence he did nothing, and gained nothing. He was condemned by the very law which he had feared.

The truth of the parable, as a whole, is this. Just as the framework brings all Christians into the Kingdom of Christ, so this central part of the parable insists that there must be in every Christian life some return of service for what God has done for that life. The rewards of God are of grace, and generous to the full limit of one's fitness to receive. But service there must be, if a man would show himself worthy of any rewards of honor and responsibility in the Kingdom of Christ. However, as will be observed, the man who had gained nothing was not cast out, and consigned to anguish. His judgment was one of privation, a sentence of loss. Possibly a person might be saved, by the infinite mercy of God, without returns of service; but such a person, as here suggested, would be of small worth, either to himself or in the eyes of God.

These then are the principal truths of this parable, which comes as near as any other one Scripture, perhaps, to answering definitely the question, "Can a man be saved outside of the Kingdom of Christ,—outside of the Church of God?" To that question, this parable seems to say, "No." Destruction awaited those who refused willingly to ally themselves with the kingdom of the King in the parable. "Can a man be saved within the Church, when he is not an active worker?" The parable seems to say, "Yes,"—when one supposes, for sake of the argument, that a wholly inactive Christian were possible. "Would such a person, if he were saved, grow into anything worth while to God or men in the Kingdom of Christ?" "Not a thing!" answers this parable, with decided emphasis. God could have no use which even He could make of such a person. To be a Christian, which is the same thing as being saved worth while, a man must be in the Church of God: for His people have never stood aloof from Him. By such membership in the Church, men publicly and rightly, according to God's appointment, acknowledge their faith in Christ, and His sovereignty as their Lord and King. The saved must be, and will be, in some way, actively identified with the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. That is the special truth of this Parable of the Pounds.

When Jesus "had thus spoken, He went on before, going up to Jerusalem," in a suburb of which He appears in the next recorded

incident of His life-work. This journey was made during the Passover season, when many Jews were on their way to Jerusalem. The interest of the common people in Jesus was very great. They had hopes of seeing Him at the approaching Feast, and inquired earnestly whether they should probably have that pleasure. There were others also (appointed spies, probably) who were on the lookout for Jesus: for the chief priests and the Pharisees had given commandment that, if any men knew where He was, he should shew it, that they might take Him." Amid this environment of cherished hopes and deadly hatred, the Lord Jesus, with His Apostles, drew near, for the last time before His Death, to the City of Jerusalem.

4. *Love to Christ the Supreme Thing.* The long period of quiet retirement, which has occupied this chapter, came to an end in the town of Bethany, which was situated at a short distance from the City wall on the east side, across the brook Kedron, and just beyond the southern brow of the Mount of Olives. This last event of the period, which took place in Bethany, was a supper, in company with Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, possibly given in honor of Lazarus, who had recently been raised from the dead. The central thought of this occasion was that which exalted love to Christ as the supreme thing in life.

The supper in Bethany was given in the house of Simon the Leper. The date was six days before the Passover, probably on Friday, or Saturday evening, before the Passover Week. Jesus was present, although Lazarus was probably the guest of honor on that occasion. Martha served the meal, while Mary probably sat at the table, adoring the Lord. The Apostles were present. Many of the common people also, having learned of the supper, had come, while the supper was in progress, to see Jesus, and Lazarus also, the latter being, since his resurrection from the dead, both a wonder to men and an effective witness for the power of Christ.*

*So effective, indeed, was his witness to the Son of God, that "the chief priests took counsel that they might put Lazarus also to death; because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus." These words suggest also how readily, on occasion, the Jews could take counsel against any person, or movement, that was favorable to the Lord Jesus and His Kingdom. (*John* 12:9-11).

The central incident of this general occasion was the anointing of Jesus. This took place at the close of the meal, but while the guests were still reclining at the table. "Mary therefore took a pound of ointment of spikenard, very precious, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment." That was an act on her part of pure devotion to her Lord and Savior.

2. Mary's Anointing of Jesus
Matthew 26:7-9
Mark 14:3-5
John 12:3-6

therefore took a pound of ointment of spikenard, very precious, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment."

But there were "some" of the Apostles, as Matthew and Mark suggest, with a charity that keeps the matter impersonal, who were displeased with the thing that Mary had done. John recorded the objection more directly, in the following personal statement. "But Judas Iscariot, one of the Disciples, which should betray him, saith, 'Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?' Now this he said, not because he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and having the bag, took away what was put therein."

But Jesus, defending this act of Mary, said, "Let her alone: why trouble ye her? She hath wrought a good work on Me.

3. Christ's Defense of Mary: the Lesson in Love
Matthew 26:10-13
Mark 14:6-9
John 12:7-8

For ye have the poor always with you, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but Me ye have not always. She hath done what she could: she hath anointed My body aforehand for the burying. And verily I say unto you, Whosoever the Gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, that

also which this woman hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her."

That was the comprehensive reply of Jesus. In it He defended Mary, even in the extravagance of her love, as it had appeared to the Apostles. He fully answered the (probably insincere) complaint of Judas. He justified the act in itself as one of inestimable value to the Kingdom and service of Christ in all the world. He exalted love, and loving devotion of the soul to Himself, as the thing of first importance in life, thus laying divine emphasis upon that which gives value and power to all else worth while in human life for time and eternity.

It is eminently fitting that this chapter should close with this scene of almost pure devotion to Jesus by those who loved Him: for there is here another set of facts that are different. This last scene, although it was a love feast with friends, was also a gathering of all the forces that were about to become so active in the

stirring events of the Passion Week. There was Christ. There were the women. There were the Apostles, with Judas, the traitor, forging to the front. There were the common people, who should serve as a background, and uncertain check upon the wrath of His enemies. There, too, were the suggestions of the scribes and Pharisees, who, during His retirement from the City, had laid deep their plans against His life. So the curtain falls on the scene, to rise next upon the final week of conflict, suffering, and death.

PART VI
THE PASSION WEEK

"THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS"

Jeremiah 23:6.

THE VICARIOUS SACRIFICE AND TRIUMPH OF CHRIST

"Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected of men; a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not.

"Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every man to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare His generation? For He was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of My people was He stricken. And He made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death; because He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth.

"Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief: when Thou shalt make His Soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. He shall see of the travail of His Soul, and shall be satisfied: by His knowledge shall My righteous Servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong; because He hath poured out His Soul unto death: and He was numbered with the transgressors; and He bare the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." *Isaiah 53:1-12.*

GOD IS JUST, AND JUSTIFIER OF BELIEVERS

"Therefore by the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the Law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the Law is manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His Blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." *Romans 3:20-26.*

RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH

"But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, . . . That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." *Romans 10:6-10.*

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE DAYS OF PUBLIC CONFLICT

"Behold, I lay in Sion a Chief Corner Stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe He is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the Stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the Head of the Corner, and a Stone of stumbling, and a Rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the Word, being disobedient." *1. Peter 2:6-8.*

"Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood There is no fear of God before their eyes." *Romans 3:13-18.*

"They are of the world: We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error." *1. John 4:5-6.*

The Passion Week of the Lord Jesus Christ was identical with that of the Jewish Passover, which occurred early in the month of April, as time is now counted. This Passion Week began with that Sabbath Day on which the Lord Jesus made His Triumphal Entry into the City of Jerusalem. During the first days of this week of His suffering, the Son of God waged an open and successful conflict with His enemies. Wednesday and Thursday forenoon of this week were "days of silence," since there are no records of events during that time. Thursday afternoon and evening Jesus spent, in a quiet way, with the Apostles, until the time of His arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane, which occurred probably near the turn of midnight. Then on Friday, in stirring succession, came the Lord's Trials, His Crucifixion, and His Burial. The most important aspects of these central events will be considered in the following nine chapters which constitute Part VI of the Life-Work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Passion Week, as already suggested, began on the Sabbath of the Triumphal Entry. That day, and the Monday and Tuesday that followed, were days of open conflict. While Jesus had been absent from Jerusalem, as described in the previous chapter, the decision of His enemies to put Him to death had crystalized into a fixed purpose.

The scribes and Pharisees were therefore now studying how they might carry that purpose into execution. This they intended

to do during the Passover Week, or as soon thereafter as the temper of the Common People would allow. Those rulers of the Jews were therefore watching every opportunity that should arise that might prove favorable to their plans. They held themselves ready also for hastily calling a council at any moment to decide what to do, if events should take some extraordinary turn.

Such were the undercurrents of deadly purpose which the Lord's enemies had set in motion while He had been absent from the City. Besides this, they were furious with hatred, and blind with religious fanaticism, because the Lord Jesus had transferred His activities from Galilee to their ecclesiastical center at Jerusalem. In this determined spirit, therefore, the scribes and Pharisees confronted Jesus upon His return to Jerusalem at the beginning of the Passion Week.

I. Sabbath Day—The Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem

It was the Sabbath morning following the supper in Bethany, which was described in the last chapter. Doubtless the news had spread rapidly, that Jesus was in Bethany, and would probably come to Jerusalem on this Sabbath morning. The visiting Jews especially, who had come to the Feast from all parts of the Jewish world, had gathered on the Bethany road, in great numbers, to see Jesus as He entered the City. The emotions of the multitude were intense. There was a general impatient desire to see Jesus. There was a common feeling that something unusual was about to happen. The deep-laid plots of the scribes and Pharisees gave rise to a nervous concern for every movement of Jesus, which greatly intensified the suspense and uncertainty that hovered over the entire situation.

1. *The Preparation of Christ for His Triumphal Entry.* The Lord Jesus, facing this situation, calmly made the preparations that were necessary for His prophetic entrance into the Sacred City. This was done by means of detailed directions which He gave to two of His Disciples, and which they immediately carried out. Concerning the details of the plan by which Jesus secured the ass and her colt for His use on this occasion, there is remarkable agreement among the four Gospel writers who record the event.

Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem

Matthew 21:1-11

Mark 11:1-11

Luke 19:29-44

John 12:12-19

Royal Entrance as Prophesied

Matthew 21:1-7

Mark 11:1-7

Luke 19:29-35

John 12:12

Among them, however, there are some slight differences in point of emphasis. Matthew, in a special way, and John, to some extent, give prominence to the prophetic aspect of Christ's entering the City as He did. Mark and Luke emphasize the part taken by the two Disciples in making the preparations; but John omits this feature of the record altogether. All three of these writers refer to the fact that the ass on which Jesus rode was young and unriden before. Mark mentions the promise of the Disciples to return the ass to her place again; and Luke suggests that the Disciples may have given Jesus some assistance in mounting the beast. But John viewed the incident more from the standpoint of the multitude, and their interests in the happenings of the occasion; and this fact accounts for his giving no record of the preparations made for the event by the two Disciples.

2. *The Royal Entrance into the City.* When the preparations were completed, the royal entrance began. It was a simple performance; but the spectacle was very imposing in its simple grandeur. The scene was one of great enthusiasm. There were three special points of interest which the reader will readily see in that slow-moving procession as it approached the Sacred City on that Sabbath morning.

**Royal Honor and
Envy toward Jesus**
Matthew 21:8-9
Mark 11:8-9
Luke 19:35-40
John 12:12-19

The people honored Jesus on that occasion. Some went before and laid down their garments, and branches from the palm trees, for Him to ride over. Slowly after those in front, came the Lord Himself, sitting upon the ass, on which the Disciples had placed their own outer garments for Him to sit upon. After Him, came the remainder of the multitude, falling enthusiastically into the never ending procession, as it moved on, with great exultation, into the City. The evident purpose of the people was to do all the honor possible to Jesus on this occasion.

The people exalted Jesus as the King of Israel. The long procession had one voice of applause, both those who went before, and those who came after Him. Besides these, who were in the moving line, John suggests that other multitudes, who, having gone out to meet this procession, were standing possibly by the wayside, added their voices to the general chorus of praise and exaltation, which expressed always the same general sentiment.

Among the many expressions that arose from that vast multitude, voicing their praises of Jesus, the following have been pre-

**1. Jesus Honored
by the People**

**2. Jesus Exalted as
King of Israel**

served in the sacred records: "Hosanna: Blessed is He That cometh in the Name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!"

Hosannas to Jesus "Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is He That cometh in the Name of the Lord;

Hosanna in the highest!" "Hosanna: Blessed is He That cometh in the Name of the Lord: Blessed is the Kingdom that cometh, the Kingdom of our father David: Hosanna in the highest!" "Blessed is the King That cometh in the Name of the Lord: peace in Heaven, and glory in the highest!" These notes of praise, caught up by successive groups of that vast throng, and following one upon another, rolled across that moving crowd, like waves of the sea. The volume of praise rose to the heavens; and the "Hosannas" were remembered after the events of this day had passed into history.

But all was not harmony in that crowd that day. The enemies of Christ were there, with envy and resentment at these signs of

3. Jesus Envied by His Enemies

His success with the common people. These chief priests and Pharisees were probably standing in a group, at one side of the procession, where they could read, in the enthusiasm of the occasion, the complete failure, as it then appeared, of all their previous opposition to the Son of God. "Behold," they said among themselves, "how ye prevail nothing: lo, the world is gone after Him!"

These enemies of the Lord endured this popular praise of Him as long as their envy would allow. Then they tried to silence the people, by an appeal to Jesus Himself. They said to Him: "Master, rebuke Thy disciples!" But He, using an ancient prophecy, said to them: "I tell you that, if these shall hold their peace, the stones will cry out."¹ By these words He meant that the exultation of the people on this occasion was inevitable, irresistible, and, at least in its inner motive, acceptable. It was not meet that the Son of God, making such a royal entrance into the Sacred City, should do so without the praises of God's ancient people.

3. *The Actions of Christ within the City.* So the enthusiastic procession moved on slowly into the City. Of all that Jesus may have said and done on that great day, only two things have been recorded. The first of these happened on the way to the City; the other engaged His attention, at least for a part of the time, while He was within the Temple. Both of them were acts of His

Christ as King (References below)

¹Habakkuk 2:11.

sovereign authority. They were perhaps selected as especially significant for the records of that occasion, since the people had exalted Him as King of Israel that day.

As the procession drew near to the City, Christ looked upon it with divine sadness. He wept over it, saying, "If thou hadst

**1. Christ's Judgment
upon Jerusalem
Luke 19:41-44**

known in this day, even thou, the things which belong unto peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes." Thus He sighed for what He might have done for that ancient people of God, and could not do because of their blindness in failing to recognize Himself as the Son of God, and Messiah of Israel.

Looking then into the future, He sighed again for the divine judgments which were overhanging that once Sacred City, as a consequence of unbelief. "For the days will come upon thee," He said, "when thine enemies shall cast up a bank about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall dash thee to the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation."

"When he was come into Jerusalem, all the City was stirred." Everywhere men were asking, "Who is This?" And everywhere

**2. Christ's Royal
Survey of the
Temple
Matthew 21:10-11
Mark 11:11**

the people were answering, with pride and assurance, "This is the Prophet, Jesus, from Galilee." Possibly a large part of the day was spent in getting into the City. At length, the Lord Jesus reached the Temple. What He did there is not recorded, except this one action of His: He made an authoritative survey of all that was going on at that time in the House of God. By the time that survey was completed, it was eventide; and He went out to Bethany with the Twelve. So ended the great day of triumph, which awakened the most enthusiastic applause of His friends, set Himself forth as King of the Jews, and stirred deeper than ever before the determined wrath of His enemies.

II. Monday—The Cleansing Again of the Temple

The next day—Monday—was one of aggressive activity on the part of Jesus. He spent the entire day in Jerusalem, going in from Bethany in the early morning, and returning to Bethany in the evening. Two central events are noted in the records of that day.

1. Christ's Cursing the Barren Fig Tree. The records of this Monday open with an account of Christ's return, in the early morning, to the City. He was then hungry. The fact suggests a night of fasting and prayer, and not one spent with His friends in Bethany. The place of this judgment was near Bethphage, "the house of figs," on the Mount of Olives, which is still dotted here and there with clumps of fig trees.

**Judgment on the
Deceptive Tree**
Matthew 21:18-19
Mark 11:12-14

Jesus came, thus hungry, to this region of figs. His thought turned naturally to the fruit of the trees. Seeing, at some distance from the road, a tree in full leaf, He went to it, expecting to find fruit; for a fig tree, in that region, having full grown leaves, should have ripe figs. But when Jesus came to the tree He found no fruit, but only leaves; and He pronounced upon the tree this curse: "No man eat fruit from thee henceforth for ever." The Apostles heard these solemn words; but, turning away again to their journey, they seem not to have noticed then the immediate effect of this curse upon the tree: for the note of wonder, on the part of the Apostles, which Matthew's condensed record brought into his next verse, seems definitely to be a part of what happened one day later, while Jesus and the Apostles were returning to the City on Tuesday morning.

**2. Significance
of This Curse**

The significance of this curse at that time is plain. Incidentally, there was, in the fact of His hunger, an emphasis upon the human nature of Jesus. This fact of His human nature was kept constantly in the reader's mind at this time, because of Christ's death on the cross near the end of this Passion Week. Furthermore, such an emphasis upon His human nature was often an antecedent to an assertion of His divine power and authority. The Son of God Himself, in the divinest moments of His life-work, designated Himself as the Son of Man. That is an incidental truth of this situation of judgment. But the more direct meaning of the curse turns upon the cause of this judgment.

The fig tree was cursed because it was false, and not because it was barren. The full grown leaves promised fruit on the tree, and it had none. The tree was false. This fact suggested at once the falseness of Israel in that day. Outwardly, their forms and religious performances made a great show of spiritual fruits; but inwardly, they were without the Spirit of God, and without

the fruits of righteousness. In the blindness of error and evil, and in consequent weakness, they were opposing the Son of God: for the strength that bears fruit springs from truth, and right, and faith, as Christ stated in His comments on this incident on the next day.

The incident had therefore a double meaning for the Apostles. It was an assertion of Christ's divine power, suggesting victory for His Kingdom, and courage to His Apostles. It also symbolized divine judgment upon the false and fruitless system of the Jewish religion in that day. The chief priests and Pharisees were doing all in their power to bring about the death of Jesus. That they did accomplish, as they thought, but not in fact; for never did they do anything except as the Son of God delivered Himself into their hands.

This incident was a quiet demonstration of that Divine Power in Jesus which His Apostles were not supposed to forget, even in the darkest hours of His suffering and death. Here was a proof, pointedly suggestive in its symbolism, of that power supreme above the power of man or men, with one blast of which He could destroy His adversaries, if He chose to do so: that power which gave Him supreme control over every circumstance through which He passed during this Passion Week, in which He gave His Life a ransom for the salvation of the world. Had the Apostles remembered the deeper truth of this incident of judgment, there would have been always a light for them even in the darkest hours through which they were to pass during this week upon which they were just entering at this time.

2. *Christ's Second Cleansing of the Temple.* In perfect accord with this deeper significance of the judgment on the false fig tree, Jesus spent most of this Monday engaged in reform work in the House of God. From the incident of the fig tree, Jesus went directly into the City, and "entered into the Temple, and began to cast out them that sold and them that bought in the Temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves; and He would not suffer that any man should carry a vessel through the Temple." The great need of this second cleansing of the Temple, the Lord had evidently noted, with divine concern no doubt, in His royal survey, on the previous day, of all that was then going on in the House of God.²

Reform Work in the Temple

Matthew 21:12-16

Mark 11:15-18

Luke 19:45-48

²For the first cleansing of the Temple, see Chapter IV, pages 82-85.

This Monday in the Temple, as suggested in the outline records of the day, was a busy day with the Lord Jesus. First, He cleansed the Temple, as stated above. Next,

1. Other Activities of Jesus on Monday He justified what He had done, by condemning those whom He had expelled from the Temple, in terms of an ancient and authoritative conception of the House of God. "Is it not written," He asked, "My House shall be called a House of Prayer for all the nations? But ye have made it a den of robbers."³

After this justification of His authoritative action, Jesus taught the people, who crowded about Him, and listened attentively to His instructions. He also healed the blind and the lame who came to Him that day in the Temple. Meantime there was great joy and enthusiasm among the people: and even the children, catching up the refrains of the previous day of triumphal entrance, echoed their "Hosanna to the Son of David." In all of these respects, the Lord Jesus had a great day in the House of God.

But this manifestation of authority, and of popular favor, was more than His enemies could endure with silence. They resented His assumption of authority in driving them out of the Temple. They were envious of His popularity as a Teacher of the people. They were exasperated by His evident power of healing. They were even indignant at the playful songs of the children, who echoed the praises of the Lord from His previous day of triumph. They feared the popularity of Jesus, not knowing what turn His hold upon the people might take at any moment.

Therefore, with all of these mingled feelings in their hearts, the enemies of Jesus began, weakly, to complain to Jesus concerning the songs of the children. Perhaps these chief priests and scribes feared most of all the action suggested by those songs to the people who, on the day before, had praised Jesus as the King of Israel. But these complainers found the Lord Jesus ready to silence them with a convincing truth from the Eighth Psalm. Having thus failed in this manner of attack, the chief priests and scribes turned to measures of force. They took counsel with the "principal men of the people," how they might destroy Jesus. But they found it impossible to do anything then for fear of the people, whose sympathies, at that time, were strongly with Jesus.

³Compare *Isaiah* 56:7; 60:7; *Zechariah* 2:10-13; and *Jeremiah* 7:11.

So this Monday ended, without any violent action against Jesus. At evening time, He left His enemies and the multitudes in the City. Accompanied by the Apostles, Jesus retired to Bethany for the night. Luke suggests that such was His daily program during the Passion Week. "And every day He was teaching in the Temple; and every night He went out, and lodged in the mount that is called the Mount of Olives. And all the people came early in the morning to Him in the Temple, to hear Him."

3. Return to Bethany
on Monday Evening
Matthew 21:17
Mark 11:19
Cf. Luke 21:37-38

III. Tuesday—The Great Day of Conflicts.

The morning of Tuesday came. Jesus, with the Apostles, returned to the City, where the eager multitude had already assembled to greet Him again. His enemies also were ready for His return; for, between Him and them, this was destined to be a day of very intense conflict.

I. *The Preliminary Lesson in Faith and Power.* Before entering the City, however, Jesus had an opportunity to give His Apostles a lesson in faith and power, which was a fitting preamble to the conflicts into which their Master was about to enter. This occurred on that morning, when they came, on their way into the City, to the fig tree upon which Jesus had pronounced the curse on the previous morning. The Apostles wondered at the withered tree; and Jesus, in reply, spoke this lesson on faith and power.

The Withered
Fig Tree
Matthew 21:20-22
Mark 11:20-26

Faith is the source of power: for perfect faith would enable one to command the power of God. That is the truth announced on this occasion. "If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do what is done to the fig tree, but even if ye shall say unto this mountain, 'Be thou taken up and cast into the sea,' it shall be done. And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."

1. Faith the Source of Power

This truth cannot be questioned. It is the truth of faith, and prayer, and power, insisted upon throughout the Word of God. But this passage has given difficulty to some. Rightly to understand what Christ meant, one must give full weight to the two conditions which Christ here set forth. There are two *if's*; and both are important.

If ye have faith. That is the first condition of power. But real faith means life. Perfect faith means perfect conformity to the

2. How Faith Gives Power

law of God. It means perfect accord of mind and heart with the mind and heart of God. It means that there is an unerring thought in man's mind, and a perfect love in man's heart, like unto the thought and the love of God. That is the meaning of the first *if*.

Then, *If such a man should pray for anything*. That is the second condition of power. The very desire and prayer of such a man would be in perfect accord with the thought and love, and the will and power, of God. Such a man's prayer would fall at once into line with the certain operations of God's laws, both natural and providential. It would link him who thus prayed with God's thought and love, so as to line up one's prayers with the full resources of God Himself.*

2. *The First Attack in the Temple*. By the time that Jesus had reached the Temple on that Tuesday morning, His organized enemies, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders of the people, as the rulers of the Jews were then called, were ready for making an attack upon Him. Probably they had spent most of the previous night perfecting their plans for a successful conflict immediately upon Christ's return to the Temple. The issue was destined to be somewhat decisive, but not in their favor.

This first attack was deliberately planned. His enemies boldly questioned (or challenged) Christ's authority in the cleansing of the Temple. This form of the attack was a direct and studied expression of their feeling of resentment against His action on the previous day, when He drove them forth from the House of God. They hoped that they might, by raising this practical question, entangle the Lord in some way with the interests of certain individuals who would help to carry out the wicked plans against His life.

The beginning of this attack was dramatic. Jesus had met the eager crowds in the Temple, and was teaching them. But He was interrupted in His discourse by the chief priests and the elders, who crowded into His divine presence, perhaps with abrupt in-

*James declared that "the effectual fervent prayer of the righteous man availeth much." That is the truth here. Hence the two conditions of prayer laid down by Christ. According to Mark, Christ first said to the Apostles, "Have faith in God." This He emphasized for the length of two long verses. Then He insisted on the condition of righteousness, such as a "faith that works by love" should produce in every life. This result Christ felt to be sufficiently proved under the test of forgiveness: for this proves the heart, whence issues all the conduct of life. Forgiving makes it possible for God to forgive. So it is that righteousness everywhere makes it possible for God to bless, with the blessings that the heart should desire. In the last analysis, it is *faith in action* that makes prayers answerable, and that insures their answer. Compare *James* 5:16; *John* 9:31; *Numbers* 11:2; and *Genesis* 18:25.

trusion, and demanded of Him in these words: "Tell us: By what authority doest Thou these things? Or, who is He that gave Thee this authority?" Evidently they

(1) Statement of the Question

did not seek information, but intended rather, by this double question, to make a charge of presumption on the part of Christ for the authority which He had exercised on the previous day in driving them from the Temple.

The answer to their charge turned upon the divine Nature and Mission of Jesus Christ. From that angle, Jesus made His reply,

presenting a counter question to His enemies. **(2) Christ's Defence of His Authority** Between the integrity of John the Baptist, as universally accepted, and that Prophet's

clear witness to Christ Himself, the Lord Jesus put His enemies in an embarrassing dilemma. "The baptism of John, was it from Heaven, or of men?" They dared not discount John: for they feared the people. They dared not approve John: for he testified of Christ. Cowardly they withdrew from the dangerous situation which Jesus had erected before them, declaring themselves unable to make an answer.

This defense was doubly effective. It withstood the attack, and it exposed Christ's enemies. Before the multitude, who doubtless heard with astonishment and contempt, these hypocritical leaders of religion were forced to admit that they could not see spiritual facts, even when they were so obvious as those in the work of John the Baptist. That being true, there was nothing to be accomplished by Christ's pointing out the spiritual facts in His own Divine Nature and His consequent Divine Authority for what He had done. In this way Christ turned the hollowness of this inquiry back upon His enemies, and made their attack upon His Divine Nature an effective revelation of their own evil natures.

In answering their attack, Christ effectively exposed the insincerity of His enemies. But in the sequel to that answer, Christ

2. Three Subsequent Parables of Warning treated them as if they had asked for the light of truth. He taught them, speaking boldly, parables of warning, in which he dealt with the spiritual condition of the Jews, and the threatening dangers to which they were then subjected.

He exhibited their spiritual status before God. This He did,

(1) Parable of the Two Sons
Matthew 21:28-32

first, in the Parable of the Two Sons. The father commanded both sons to go and work. The first replied, "I will not;" but afterward he repented, and went. The second promised to go, but went not. "Whether of the twain," asked

Christ, "did the will of his father?" The adversaries of Christ agreed that the first son only had done so.

"So," said Christ, with the emphasis of a mild oath, "the publicans and harlots go into the Kingdom of God before you." These rulers of the Jews were, formally at least, committed to a life of obedience. Upon them was a fixed promise to do the will of God. But they were not doing God's will. John came to teach them the will of God, that they should repent in preparation for a sympathetic reception of the son of God. But they did not respond. They failed in their promise of obedience.

The publicans and sinners were different. Their lives had been committed to disobedience. Yet they heard the message of John, and heeded his call to repentance. But the rulers of Israel did not. They refused to be moved, even when they saw the Spirit of God turning avowed sinners to repentance and faith. They would not turn enough toward God that they might recognize and accept His own Divine Son in their midst. This perverseness of nature in them, and their spiritual insensibility, seems to have surprised even the divine understanding of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Resolutely the rulers of the Jews refused to enter into the Kingdom of God as newly organized under His Son in that day.

And they did a thing still worse. They tried to take that Kingdom away from God's own Son, Who was Heir to the Kingdom.

(2) Parable of
the Wicked
Husbandmen
Matthew 21:33-46
Mark 12:1-12
Luke 20:9-19

That is, they were bent upon maintaining God's Kingdom of Grace *their way*. They were determined that God's visible Kingdom should remain as it was then organized and administered by themselves in Jerusalem. They did not intend to allow God's Kingdom to be adjusted God's way, not even under the

direction and administration of God's own Son. That is the central truth of the Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen, which made a powerful impression as spoken by Christ on this occasion.

The Householder in the parable had planted his vineyard, and had cared for it diligently, even as God had done in choosing Israel, and caring for that nation. He had let out his vineyard to husbandmen, as God had committed the administration of His Kingdom to the chosen rulers of His people, who were to render to Him spiritual returns. The wicked husbandmen killed the servants who were sent to receive the fruits of the vineyard, even

a. Main Facts
of the Parable

as the rulers of the Jews had persecuted and killed the prophets whom God had sent to promote righteous returns in the lives of the Jews.

The Householder, at last, had sent his son, even as God had sent His Son Jesus Christ to Israel in that day. The wicked husbandmen said among themselves, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and take his inheritance." So they killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard. That was exactly, in fact and in motive, what the rulers of the Jews were trying to do with Jesus Christ, the Son of God. They were planning to kill the Son and Heir, so that they might take (or keep) the Kingdom in their own hands. Finally, the Householder destroyed those wicked husbandmen, and gave his vineyard to others who would render him returns. That was what God was about to do with His Kingdom, when He opened its doors to the Gentile world.

Fearful consequences were certain to follow this hostile attitude of the rulers of Israel. They were fighting a losing battle against the God of their fathers, in thus opposing the Kingdom of His Son. But that Kingdom was destined to go on to victory. The Stone which the builders had rejected was appointed to be the Head of the Corner, and that Stone was Christ.⁵

The Kingdom of God and of His Son was not to be thwarted in this way by His enemies. God could even dispense with His once chosen people altogether; and yet the Kingdom would go on to success. There is life and eternal joy for him who wisely enters the Kingdom. There is calamity for him who stumbles in point of faith and acceptance. He "shall be broken to pieces." But there is an unspeakable doom for him who willfully opposes the Kingdom of God. "On whomsoever it shall fall, it will scatter him as dust." Men decide these results by their attitude toward Christ and His Kingdom. The Jews were deciding their own fate. "The Kingdom of God shall be taken away from you," said Christ, "and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."

The chief priests and the Pharisees had no doubt of Christ's meaning. He was speaking their own doom, and they knew it full well. But instead of profiting by His words, they resented His analysis. They desired at once to lay violent hands on the Son of God, exactly as He had pictured them in the parable. They were re-

**c. Results of
the Parable**

⁵1. *Peter* 2:3-10.

strained from such violence, however, by their fear of the people, who sympathetically accepted Christ as a great Prophet.

Thus the death of Jesus came again into view as a fact that was determined; but it was again prevented, because the common people who loved the Lord, and those who were sympathetic with His work, were a force which His enemies still feared to antagonize. Seeing this situation, some at least of His enemies left Him, and went away, possibly to lay plans for the second and more drastic attack upon the Son of God.

But the Lord Jesus did not relinquish His hold upon that situation until He had spoken another parable, warning those who remained with Him of what would befall Israel when God called that nation to answer for their attitude toward Jesus Christ. This warning of judgment Christ expressed through His Parable of the King's Marriage Feast. In it He showed that the nation, as stated under the previous parable, was already doomed. The only escape for the people was through an individual acceptance of Christ; and a personal entrance, in this way, into His Kingdom. In this central truth, Christ joined judgment and mercy in the warning of this parable.

Hope for the Jews lay only in personal response to Jesus, in that preparation of the heart which arises from individual faith and acceptance of Christ. There was no other way to be saved in the Kingdom, from the spiritual wrecks that would result from the visitations of divine wrath upon the unresponsive Jewish Nation as a whole. The parable exhibits both classes who fail,—those who refuse to come into the Kingdom, and those who try to get in upon some other condition than that which God has prescribed. The results to both classes are very much alike.

The King in this parable prepared his feast, and then sent his servants to notify those invited that the feast was ready. But the invited guests responded in two several ways.

**(a) Kingdom
Refused by
the Jews**

Some ridiculed the invitation, and turned to secular and temporal interests. The others, moved by deeper feelings of antagonism, shamefully mistreated the King's servants and killed them. In this analysis was portrayed the indifference and the opposition with which the Jews as a people had treated the ministry of Jesus Christ. Indifference was common throughout the country. Opposition and persecution sprang from the chief priests and the

Pharisees, who were plotting the death of Jesus. Judgment fell upon both classes individually. There was also a social judgment upon those who opposed, in that their city also was destroyed. That was Christ's picture of Israel who refused to enter into His Kingdom.

But the feast must have guests, even if those bidden had proved themselves unworthy. "Go ye therefore," said the King, "unto the partings of the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage feast. And those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good; and the wedding was filled with guests."

(b) Kingdom
Opened to
the Gentiles

That part of the parable is a picture of God's Kingdom as it was opened to the Gentile world. The Kingdom was appointed from ancient times to be a universal Kingdom; but the Jews had the privilege of being first within the Kingdom. But when they, through indifference and opposition, sinned away that privilege, salvation and citizenship were rapidly extended to the Gentile world. But everywhere, among Jews and Gentiles alike, entrance into the Kingdom was based upon an invitation accepted. It is always an individual matter. Men come into the Kingdom, or they remain outside, according as they accept or reject Jesus Christ as personal Savior and King.

Men must observe this condition. The necessity of so doing is emphasized in the sad story of the man who appeared at the feast, not having on a wedding garment. He had decided to come to the marriage feast, but had ignored the conditions of admission. At the first, the King, seeing the man thus unprepared, supposed that there had been a mistake on the part of his servants, and that the man had not been properly attended by those responsible for the reception of the guests. But one kindly question revealed the true situation. The man was speechless: for he was a guilty intruder into the feast of the King.

b. Man Without
a Wedding
Garment

The truth here is that of personal responsibility in meeting the conditions of life and citizenship in the Kingdom which God Himself has established. This man without the wedding garment is typical of those who try to enter the Kingdom of Christ under conditions of their own prescribing. There are those who would affront even God with the suggestion of salvation on their own terms. Some would even dare to try to come into life, and yet deny to Jesus Christ the glory from a living faith. Some would

even presume to participate in the Kingdom of Christ, and yet refuse to acknowledge Him and honor Him as King. Such hopes and purposes are vain: for God's ways must be observed; and His Son must be honored as Lord, and Savior, and King.

God will not compromise His conditions. The King in this parable was wroth, and dealt to this offender, this insulting intruder, a summary judgment. Such will be the fate of him who attempts to prescribe conditions other than those that God has prescribed, and tries to enter His Kingdom by other ways than through personal faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. That is what many Jews in that day were trying to do; and the purport of this part of this parable was to tell them, first, that they must heed the invitation of Christ, and finally, that they must individually accept Him, and His saving grace, as the necessary condition of their acceptance with God.

3. *The Second Attack in the Temple.* "Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might ensnare Him in His talk." This was probably the same group that had left the scene at the close of the Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen. Possibly they had gone to notify the central leaders of this organized opposition, and to secure reinforcements. It is probable, also, that a new group of Pharisees joined this council at the close of the Parable of the King's Marriage Feast. As a result of all their deliberations, the Pharisees selected their shrewdest hypocrites, and sent them to carry out this second carefully planned attack. They hoped that they might, in their three successive questions, entrap the Son of God.

The first of these traps laid for the Lord Jesus had to do with the current question of paying taxes to the Roman Government.

1. Question of
Paying Taxes
to Rome
Matthew 22:15-22
Mark 12:13-17
Luke 20:20-26

The Pharisees, to make the snare more certain, themselves remained in the background, and sent a select deputation of their own disciples, as if they might in this way deceive the Son of God. They also had spies appointed for the occasion, and had engaged a number of the Herodians to be present, representing the party that was loyal to the Roman Government.

Their plans were cunningly laid. They had selected a question on which the country was divided in sharpest controversy. They had arranged for all parties to that controversy to be present. They had spies set to catch any suggestion that Jesus might make that would offend either party. They hoped most of all that Jesus would take sides with the popular prejudice against Rome,

so that they could prosecute Him before the Roman Government. Perhaps it was with a far-sighted view of this very snare for the Lord, that the Pharisees had previously joined hands with the party of Herod.*

As planned, the disciples of the Pharisees approached the Lord Jesus on this question of taxes. With hypocritical cunning, they

**(1) Hypocritical
Question about
Roman Taxes**

tried to flatter Jesus in three particulars.

They said that He was true. They said that

He taught the truth of God. They declared

Him to be, in all of His teaching, independent

of mere current opinion. After this preamble of flattery, they posed, even more hypocritically, as seekers after information.

"Tell us, therefore," they said: "What thinkest Thou? Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not?"†

But Jesus knew them, and perceived at once the wickedness of their hearts. "Why tempt ye Me, ye hypocrites?" Those

were the first words of His stunning reply.

**(2) Hypocrisy
of Questioners
Exposed**

Then, quicker almost than thought, He exposed

their evil purposes, and the malicious

deception of their hearts. That exposing of

their hypocrisy was in itself a complete answer to their question, and Jesus might have closed His reply at that point.

But Jesus went farther. He desired to show them positively that their craftily laid trap would not work against Divine Intelligence. He called for a penny. By pointing to the image of Caesar thereon, Jesus compelled His adversaries to acknowledge their obligations to the Roman Government, whose money they were then using. Then He challenged them to render their full responsibility, both to the Roman Government and to God. From this answer, and from the position in which He had placed His enemies, there was no appeal, neither for themselves nor against Him, neither to the Roman Governor nor to the Court of God.

This answer was an effective expression of Christ's divine nature. His reply brought His adversaries under the accepted obligation, as a matter of common gratitude, to estimate for

*See Chapter XIV, pages 326-327, where the two parties had previously worked together against Jesus. There is no doubt that the Pharisees exhausted their resources of craftiness, and left no possible force unused, in their attempts to counteract the work of Christ, and to destroy Him under some pretense of a legal sanction. How they finally carried through their evil intentions, will be seen in later chapters of this book that deal with His Trial and Crucifixion.

†Note that they ask for *Law*, and not expediency. "Is it lawful . . . ?" they asked. "Shall we give, or shall we not give?" The very form of the question shows their determination to compel Christ to answer pointedly *Yes*, or *No*. But the superior intelligence and sagacity of Jesus were a proof of His divinity.

themselves what they owed to Caesar. His reply also solemnly laid upon them the duty of undoing their wickedness of heart by entering upon a course of sincerity and truth in the service of God. These shafts of His bow went to the hearts of His enemies. They stood aghast at His insight, and at His answer. Recognizing that they had accomplished nothing but profound rebuke, they left Him and went away.

**(3) Adversaries
Defeated by His
Divine Insight**

**2. Question about
the Resurrection
Matthew 22:23-33
Mark 12:18-27
Luke 20:27-40**

The Pharisees failed. Then came the Sadducees. They propounded to Jesus a question concerning the resurrection of the dead. About this doctrine, however, the rich, carefree, secular minded Sadducees had neither faith nor knowledge, and they sought neither at this time. They were only trying to ridicule the Lord Jesus before the common people. The Sadducees therefore played up before Jesus an extravagant and disgusting situation, pretending that it was in keeping with the laws of Moses. They hoped either that Jesus might deny that law, or that they might turn the whole situation into confusion, and the Lord Himself into scorn in the eyes of the people.

But Christ understood His adversaries here also. He turned them at once into contempt, by affirming, and proving that they knew nothing at all about the subject which they had introduced. They knew neither the teachings of the Scriptures on this subject, nor the power of God to effect a resurrection of the dead, nor yet the spiritual nature and the spiritual laws of those who are raised from the dead. Thus Christ exposed their ignorance, and their sordid disposition to put a carnal interpretation on things spiritual.

**Ignorance of
Sadducees Exposed
and Corrected**

Then He taught them the truth, basing His doctrine on the Writings of Moses, which alone of all the Scriptures the Sadducees accepted as authority. With convincing clearness, Christ showed that the truth of the resurrection of the dead was inherent in the words of God to Moses at the Burning Bush.⁸ "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living": of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who then were long dead, and yet lived. That argument was satisfying to all who were open to conviction on this subject.

Again the Lord's triumph was complete. With divine conciseness, He summed up His answer to the Sadducees in four words:

⁸Exodus 3:1-6.

"Ye do greatly err." Some of the Scribes, forced by the truth itself to admit the correctness of Christ's teachings on this subject, withdrew from the scene of conflict. The people, too, were convinced. Instead of their laughing Jesus to scorn, as the Sadducees had hoped, the people were astonished at His teaching. The Sadducees, for the time at least, seem to have accepted their defeat.

But the Pharisees were not yet willing to give up their plans of attack upon Jesus. Still they hoped to entrap Him in some of their wily snares. Quickly, therefore, upon hearing that Jesus had put the Sadducees to confusion, the Pharisees gathered a council, and put forth one of their number to ask Jesus a catch question concerning the law.

**3. Question of
the Greatest
Commandment**
Matthew 22:34-40
Mark 12:28-34

This representative of the Pharisees was a lawyer, and doubtless a man of great reputation for learning and sagacity.⁹ Coming forward, he asked Jesus this question: "Master, which is the great commandment in the law?" Or, as Mark gives the question: "What commandment is the first of all?"

Christ immediately replied: "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel; The Lord Our God, the Lord is One: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.'" "This," said Christ, "is the great and first commandment. And a (the) second, like unto it, is this:

**(1) First and Second
Commandments**
Deut. 6:4-5
Leviticus 19:18

"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." There is none other commandment greater than these." Or, as Matthew quoted the Savior, "On these two commandments hangeth the whole law, and the prophets."

This reply was also effective. The results were both personal and general. Personally, the lawyer, who asked the question, seems to have been deeply touched. He came to ensnare. He received an answer which no man could question. He asked for the first commandment. He was told that supreme love to God was the first obligation of life. He did not ask for the second commandment: for he had hatred and murder in his heart. But he was told anyway that the second duty of life was to love his neighbor as himself. He was made to see, and to admit, that

**(2) Results of
This Attack**

⁹Who was this Pharisee? Is there a clew to his identity? Could this possibly have been Joseph of Arimathea?

love is everything—the whole law and the prophets. This man was moved to approve, to repeat, and to emphasize, the truth of Christ's reply. Doubtless he was sincere in this response: for Christ, when He saw this motion in the man's soul, said to him: "Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God."

The general results were equally effective, but in another direction. Doubtless many of His adversaries, as well as multitudes of the common people, were standing by, and heard the exalted character of Christ's authoritative answer concerning the laws of God. They also felt the moral thrust in His answer, which He aimed at their evil and murderous hearts. The very majesty with which He dealt with these highest duties terrified His enemies into silence. Many things may have happened in the multiplied re-actions within the crowd; but the sacred historian is content to record, that "no man after that durst ask Him any question."

4. *The Counter Attack of Christ upon the Rulers of the Jews.* The second attack of Christ's enemies had come to naught, as already described. But the Lord was far from being done with His enemies merely because He had silenced them by His divine answers to their designing questions. Even before the Pharisees, whom He had brought into confusion, could hurry away from the scene, Jesus launched against them and the scribes an unsparing counter attack, which was His last formal address to His enemies.

This counter movement the Lord began with a question which His enemies could not, and dared not, answer. "What think ye of the Christ? Whose Son is He?" This question they answered very readily, by saying that Christ was "the Son of David." But that answer, as the Lord doubtless intended, only led to His deeper question concerning His own Divine-Human Nature. That question Jesus laid before His enemies in these words:

1. Questions
Touching the
Natures of Christ
Matthew 22:41-46
Mark 12:35-37
Luke 20:41-44

"How then doth David in the Spirit call Him Lord, saying, 'The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand, till I put thine enemies underneath Thy feet'? If David then called Him Lord, how is He his Son?"

This last question again put His adversaries to silence. "No one was able to answer Him a word." They did not know. They

had never caught the true meaning of the most important covenant promises in their ancient Scriptures. The truth of an incarnated Son of God, through the House and Lineage of David, had never entered their spiritless minds and hearts.

Revelations and Results

Furthermore, this question of Jesus showed that His enemies really knew very little (practically nothing, in fact) about the Christ, concerning Whom they were presuming to act with such great authority. They must have felt the sting of their ignorance, when it was thus exposed; for no man dared again to ask Christ any more questions. The Lord thus had the entire situation in His own hands; and He had yet more unsparing words for the scribes and the Pharisees.

At this turn in their confusion, the scribes and Pharisees probably drew back a little way from Jesus, while His Disciples and the people in general drew closer in order to hear His words of grace. "In the hearing of all the people," as Luke says, Jesus delivered this message. Previously He had patiently instructed His enemies. But in their

2. Subsequent Denunciation of the Scribes and Pharisees

last efforts to entrap Him, they had shown that nothing of right remained to them but the words of warning, and denunciation, and the tears, with which the Lord Jesus brought this discourse to a close.

First, the Lord issued a general warning against the scribes and Pharisees. "Beware of the scribes and Pharisees," He said to the multitude and to His Disciples. Matthew quotes the Lord Jesus more fully, however, showing that He made a careful distinction, at the beginning of this warning, between the official and the personal characters of these rulers of the Jews.

(1) Public Warning against the Scribes and Pharisees Matthew 23:1-2 Mark 12:38-40 Luke 20:45-47

Officially, these enemies of Christ were the head of the Jewish Government; and, as such, they were to be respected. Christ never failed to encourage respect for constituted authority, and for general law and order in society. Furthermore, He was careful at this time not to open the way for His enemies to charge Him with encouraging insurrection in any form among the Jews. He only sought to get at the hearts of the people in some way with the vital truth. Hence He made this careful distinction, warning only against the personal, superficial, spiritless lives of these religious leaders of the Jews.

The dangerous thing about the scribes and Pharisees was their perverted moral and spiritual leadership. This fact Jesus set forth by analyzing their doings and their motives. In three strokes, He painted them at full length. First, they were hypocritical. "They say, and do not," and therefore are not to be followed. Again, they were self-seeking. They "desire to walk in long robes, and to have salutations in the marketplaces, and chief seats in the synagogues, and chief places at feasts."

**a. Dangerous
Leadership of the
Scribes and
Pharisees**

Finally, being profound in sin, these religious leaders perverted and prostituted the religion which they administered. Being hypocritical self-seekers, they used the religious institution under them for the purpose of exalting themselves. Hence "for a pretense (they) make long prayers," and loved to be called "Rabbi." They regarded their religion, and that of the people, as existing for their own glory, and they administered it accordingly. Instead of using their religious office to bless the people, these leaders engaged in active unfeeling oppression. The depths of their perversity Jesus exposed fully when He brought together their devouring of widows' houses and their pretentious prayers, as the just ground for their greater condemnation.

But the leaders of Christ's Kingdom were to be different. For them He pictured the spirituality and the democracy of the Christian Religion. "Be not ye called Rabbi." The leaders of Christianity should not seek to exalt themselves through their intellectual domination: for His citizens are brethren, and are all taught of God. Neither should they use religion to give any person social rank and self-exalting prestige: for they must all alike seek to exalt their Father in Heaven. That is the primary function of religion. "Neither be ye called masters." All authority in Christ's Kingdom rests in Christ, and must be used to exalt Him as King.

**b. Spirituality
and Democracy of
the Christian
Religion**

Instead of all that self-seeking scramble for greatness which the scribes and Pharisees carried on, Christ prescribed the democratic exaltation that arises from service. His Kingdom requires that religion be used to bless the people. Religious leaders must help make religion do that thing. Christianity knows no measure nor means of greatness except humility and service. "He that is greatest among you shall be your servant . . . and whosoever shall humble himself shall be exalted." Thus only may the greatness of the Kingdom, and greatness within the Kingdom, be attained.

These words Christ spake to His Disciples, and to the people in general. Then turning to the scribes and Pharisees, and elevating His voice for these final words of destiny, the Son of God pronounced upon the scribes and Pharisees eight distinct woes, which are probably the most fearful judgments ever pronounced upon any group of men in the history of the world. These judgments are comprehensive, exhaustive, and appalling, appearing the more so, the more carefully they are studied.

In a general way, these eight woes may be thought of as being in contrast with the eight blessings, in the Sermon on the Mount, with which Christ inaugurated His Kingdom among men. These solemn judgments express the divine indignation of the Son of God against those who had obstinately opposed His Kingdom, and were thus bringing ruin upon themselves, and the people, and their nation. These judgments have both a temporal and an eternal significance. They are also filled with profound pity, and with heart-rending prophecies, which rose to the eloquence of divine tears before the Lord Jesus had ceased to speak. There is no other page quite like this one in all the literature of the world.

Christ's denunciations of the scribes and Pharisees began with His judgment upon them because of their attempts to obstruct the progress of His Kingdom in the world.

a. Obstructing the Kingdom of Christ
Matthew 23:13

"But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye shut the Kingdom of Heaven against men: for ye enter not in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering in to enter." This judgment fell upon the "unpardonable sin" in the hearts of Christ's enemies. For that sin the judgment of God was upon them.¹⁰

Personal rejection of Christ would mean spiritual death. But worse than mere rejection was the sin of hindering the grace of God from saving others; and it was for this worse sin that Christ first judged His enemies. They had tried to defeat His Kingdom in the hearts of others, after rejecting Him from their own lives. They had perverted the Scriptures in regard to Christ, in order to blind the spiritual eyes of men. They had used threats and violence against those who might have accepted Christ.¹¹ They had stood at the door of the Kingdom, as suggested by the figure

¹⁰See Chapter XII, pages 269-278.

¹¹Compare *John* 9:22, 34.

used in this judgment, and had kept men from entering into the Kingdom of Heaven. They were hypocrites, who were really working in opposition to God. They were, therefore, fully deserving of this first great woe at the hands of the Son of God.

The second judgment shows these obstructionists to be equally opposed to mankind. They "devour widows' houses." This sin

**b. Rapacity against
the Helpless**
Matthew 23:14

of rapacity is rendered enormous in two ways. First, it is said to victimize the helpless element of society, represented in and by the widows. Further, being supported by pretended prayers, it was a covetousness cloaked in religious piety. These hypocrites were thus held responsible for a summary violation of all law, which is fulfilled by a supreme love to God and an unselfish love for one's neighbors.

The third woe defined the hypocritical scribes and Pharisees as positively and constructively bad. "Ye compass sea and land,"

**c. Proselyting Men
unto Their Ruin**
Matthew 23:15

said Christ, "to make one proselyte; and when he is become so, ye make him twofold more a son of Hell than yourselves." Being children of their father the Devil,¹² they were taking even the heathen, and fitting them more perfectly, by teaching and example, for the doom of Hell. These perverters of men had no love for men's souls, and no desire to glorify God, but sought only to promote a system that would better support and serve their own selfish purposes. By their fruits they stood condemned.

"Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, 'Whosoever shall swear by the Temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by

**d. Evading Religious
Responsibilities**
Matthew 23:16-22

the gold of the Temple, he is a debtor.' Ye fools and blind!" This pettifoggery, this casuistry, this shamming discrimination to avoid religious responsibilities, seems to have disgusted the Son of God. But such was the way of the scribes and Pharisees. They deadened all moral sensibility, even when they held immortal destinies in their hands. There is no wonder that Christ three times declared them *blind*, and once called them *fools*, besides uniformly designating them as *hypocrites*. They had no purpose to seek the will of God, and none to do it; but by casuistry, whenever possible, they excused their consciences, and thus set at naught the will of God altogether.

This deceptive juggling with the inner principles of duty bore its natural fruits in external conduct. For these fruits, the scribes

¹²See John 8:44, and Chapter XIV, page 350.

and Pharisees were next condemned. They had a perverted sense of duty. They had no true perspective upon the moral obligations of life. They were scrupulously careful in the smaller and formal matters of life; but they ignored and neglected the inner principles of all spiritual life. They were concerned only for those external aspects of duty which were easily seen of men. Reputation, and not righteousness, was the end they sought.

This evil characteristic Christ illustrated from their practice respecting the tithe, which was a fundamental law of God's Kingdom, touching the deepest responses of man's spiritual nature. But the scribes and Pharisees observed this law only in as far as performance gave publicity and reputation with men. They carefully "tithed mint and anise and cummin, and left undone the weightier matters of the law, judgment, and mercy, and faith." Their condemnation rightly rested here upon what they had not done: for they had failed to link their outward performance with any vital principles of the heart. They were "blind guides, who strain out the gnat, and swallow the camel."

In the sixth judgment, Christ condemned another thing that was essentially wrong in the lives of the scribes and Pharisees.

**f. Superficial
Purification of
of Life
Matthew 23:25-26**

Their underlying philosophy of religion was erroneous and inadequate. "Ye cleanse the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full from extortion and excess." The scribes and Pharisees supposed that an external purification would render them acceptable to God. They therefore followed a formal religion, neglecting the spirit and the heart, whence are the issues of life.

"Thou blind Pharisee," said Jesus, using the singular form of address in order to point the force of the following absolute spiritual law, which must be personally applied—"Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first the inside of the cup and of the platter, that the outside thereof may become clean also." All things pertaining to the personal spirit are from the heart within. This is the law of Cause and Effect in the Kingdom of the Spirit. External life *becomes* what the heart *is*. Love is the fulfilling of the law. Obedience (in heart) is better than sacrifice. Sanctification begins with the sanctuary of the soul. But none of these truths were observed by the scribes and Pharisees, who sought always the things that are external, superficial, and inadequate.

Christ next looked upon the evil fruits of that erroneous philosophy and practice of religion in the hearts of the scribes and Pharisees. He analyzed and judged them as they appear to the unerring eye of God. "Ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which outwardly appear beautiful, but inwardly are full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but inwardly ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity."

**g. Hypocrisy and
Moral Corruption
Matthew 23:27-28**

This comparison had a particular force then, arising from its reference to a certain religious practice of that day respecting the tombs. Once a year, as the custom was, the tombs were white-washed by the Jews, so that men might more easily see these burying places, and so avoid ceremonial contamination with the dead. This careful external whiteness was a sign of contamination within. So it was with the scribes and Pharisees. Their extreme care for external appearance was a sign of that inner pride and self-righteousness which was working calamity in all of their lives. Outwardly, they took care to look well; but within, as God saw them, they were "full of hypocrisy and iniquity."

In the final woe, Christ condemned the scribes and Pharisees for their hypocritical attempts to honor the ancient prophets whom their own fathers had slain. "Ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and garnish the tombs of the righteous, and say, 'If we had been in the days of our fathers, we should not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.'" Thus they pretended to be undoing what their fathers had done in killing the prophets. They also disclaimed any sympathy with these doings of their fathers, declaring themselves to be superior to such deeds. Yet their very interest in these matters attested their kinship with their fathers.

**h. Hypocritical
Honoring of the
Dead Prophets
Matthew 23:29-32**

This kinship, deep in their hearts, and very different from what they pretended, Christ saw to be complete. He was certain that they would act morally true to the type of their fathers: for He knew their hypocrisy. Hence He spoke with divine irony, commanding them to fill up the measure of their fathers' evil. Christ condemned them for their want of moral consistency. They were pretending to honor Moses and the prophets, whom God had sent; and yet, even then, they were making plans to murder the Son of God. They denounced the deeds of their fathers in opposing the work and workers of God; and yet they were them-

selves set in deadly opposition to the Kingdom of God and of His Son Jesus Christ.

These things Jesus knew with perfect knowledge. Being divinely certain of His grounds, He solemnly summarized His judgments in these final words of condemnation: "Ye serpents, ye offspring of vipers, how shall ye escape the judgment of Hell?"

**Solemn Summary
of Divine Judgment
Matthew 23:33-36**

Therefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: some of them shall ye kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city: that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of Abel the righteous unto the blood of Zachariah, son of Barachiah, whom ye slew between the sanctuary and the altar. Verily I say unto you, all these things shall come upon this generation."

This survey of evil-hearted leadership, of personal and national opportunities unimproved, of temporal calamity, and of eternal woe, stirred the heart of the Son of God with love and pity unspeakable. He ceased to judge. The leaders of Israel were determined and confirmed in their errors and sins. They were certain to lead the Nation on to ruin, as the Lord Jesus had suggested. One thing only remained to the Son of God. He could weep. His were tears of disappointment, and regret, and eternal sadness:

**(3) Christ's Weeping
over Jerusalem
Matthew 23:37-39
Cf. Luke 13:34-35**

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her! How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, 'Blessed is he that cometh in the Name of the Lord.'"

5. *The Three Closing Scenes of Christ's Public Ministry.* Those words of sadness closed that long discourse against the scribes and Pharisees. However, three other incidents occurred before Jesus left the Temple on that memorable Tuesday evening. These three scenes that remain to be considered were the closing scenes of Christ's public ministry.

The first of these last scenes was the incident of the poor widow's offering in the Temple. Along with the wealthy scribes,

and Pharisees, and Sadducees, who made a great showing of their gifts, this poor widow came with her two mites, which was

1. Widow's Gift of Two Mites: Her All into the treasury of the Temple. When Jesus saw what was done, He declared that she had given "more than they all."

Mark 12:41-44

Luke 21:1-4

What did Christ mean? He pointed, beyond the gifts, to the spiritual significance of the giving on that occasion. The rich, from their abundance, gave for show. The poor widow, from love and sacrifice, gave for service. Therein lay the great difference.

(1) Meaning of Christ's Comment

God's problem is not to get money, but to get at the hearts of men with His truth and saving grace. In that day, the important thing was not what Israel meant to God, but what God in Christ might mean to Israel. Giving is best, not when it tries to enrich God, but when it opens the way for God to enrich human life. Such an opportunity the poor widow presented to the Lord in the spirit and motive of her giving on this occasion. God wants, not great wealth, but workable opportunities; and in satisfying that divine need, this poor widow's sacrifice of love was superior to all other gifts that were cast into the treasury.

The poor widow is set in contrast with the wealthy contributors, who doubtless were scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees. There is an obvious contrast also between Christ's cordial commendation of this poor widow, and His recent judgments on the scribes and

(2) Cordiality of Christ's Comment

Pharisees. They had refused Him the privilege of saving and blessing the Nation, by setting up an attitude of national opposition. For that cause He had wept over the Nation. But there was, in this individual heart, a source of divine consolation: for where love is active, there God is possible. The poor widow, in point of principle, represented the exact opposite of that which Christ had condemned in the scribes and Pharisees. This contrast doubtless increased the Lord's cordiality toward this gift of love, which has proved profitable beyond measure in the work of the Kingdom in the hearts of men and women throughout the world.

The second incident of these closing scenes was that of the Greeks' coming to Jesus. They represented the Gentile world,

2. Greeks Seeking Jesus

John 12:20-36

and suggested the world at large for which Christ was about to die. Probably they had held themselves back during this stirring day, until the day was far spent. But toward evening, they came nearer, watching favorable opportunity, after the

crowd had partially scattered, and Jesus Himself had gone apart in the open and sat down opposite the treasury, in order that they might see the Lord.

These Greeks had come to the Feast of the Passover. Probably they were proselytes to the Jewish religion. They seem to have

**(1) Presentation
of the Greeks
to Jesus
John 12:20-22**

been timid. Therefore they came first to Philip, whose name, as does also that of Andrew, suggests some Greek connections, possibly in Bethsaida.¹³ To Philip the Greeks said, "Sir, we would see Jesus." Philip mentioned this request to Andrew, and they together brought the request to Jesus. Whether the Lord received the Greeks, or not, the narrative does not state; but it is probable that He did recognize them in some way. John, in recording this incident, turned at this point in his narrative to the profound effect of this Gentile request upon the mind and heart of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The thought of Jesus, upon hearing this request of the Greeks, turned at once to His own Death, which was a fact of the near

**(2) Suggestion of
His Own Death
to Jesus
John 12:23-26**

future. "The hour is come," He said, "that the Son of Man should be glorified." The presence of these Gentiles had suggested to Christ the thought of His own death to save a lost world. Following this thought, Jesus emphasized the necessity of Sacrifice as a condition of fruitfulness in spiritual life.

He pointed to the analogy between life and a grain of wheat, which must itself die if it would spring up and bear fruit. So life itself, He argued, must be regarded as a means of service, and not as an end in itself. Only in so using life, in so losing it indeed, can one attain that for which life is worthily lived. That was the principle of sacrifice which Christ held for Himself, and held forth for His disciples. The purpose of life is not to save life, but to use it: with it to serve Christ, and so make it possible to receive honor from the Father in Heaven.

This line of thought brought Jesus face to face with the Cross, and His soul was troubled. His human nature cried out in

**(3) Anguish vs.
Resignation of
Jesus Christ
John 12:27-28**

anguish, as He felt the burden of a world's sin upon His own life. He bore "our sins in His own body on the tree," and already He groaned under that weight of sin. His human nature shrank before this sudden suggestion of Himself as a Sin-Offering for all the world,—of His Death

¹³See Chapter VI, Note 2.

as the sacrificial basis of an atonement before the righteous judgment throne of God. It was neither moral cowardice nor weakness that moved His soul so deeply. Yet, for a moment, even the Son of God, facing the thought of His Cross, prayed, "Father, save Me from this hour."

But there was a deeper thought in the heart of Christ. That was the thought which immediately possessed His spirit. It was the thought of the whole Plan of Salvation, in the original covenant of redemption, which was made between the Son of God and His Father in Heaven. That covenant involved the death of Christ; and yet to that covenant He must be faithful, and desired so to be. Without a break in His prayer, therefore, there came from His deepest heart the triumphant voice of resignation: "But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy Name." Being the Son of God, Jesus could not stop short of that exalted petition.

Therein lay the triumph of His own glory and reward. His glory was one with that of His Father. Hence the Father's assurance to His Son: "I have both glorified (My

(4) **Assurances:**
Divine and Human
John 12:29-36

Name), and will glorify it again." This voice was heard by the people. Some of them thought that it was thunder which they had heard. Others said that it was an angel speaking to Jesus. The fact that this difference of opinion is attributed to the multitude suggests that the Apostles, and possibly other disciples who were near to the Lord, may have heard and understood the words of this message from the Father to His Son.

But these words had a message for the people, as Christ explained. Once already He had met the Kingdom of Darkness, in His Temptations, and had triumphed. In His own Death and Resurrection was to be accomplished the complete victory over Sin and Death. Hence the comfort and courage in these words: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth (crucified), will draw all men unto Myself."

Jesus knew that He, in His death hour, should achieve glory for His Father, and for Himself, and salvation for His people. It only remained therefore for the people to accept Him, in the light of His own splendid nature as the Son of God, and then to await the issue of the event of His Death and Resurrection, to which He had so clearly pointed them. Having thus translated Heaven's assurance, "He departed, and hid Himself from them."

Jesus soon re-appeared, however, for the farewell scene of His public ministry. In it is summarized the attitudes of Christ and

His enemies toward one another. The day in the Temple had come to a close. One may fancy that the Lord Jesus was taking

His final leave of the friends and foes who had gathered about Him during the day. Perhaps it was at the door of the Temple, or even in the outer court, that He paused, and turned back to the dispersing crowd, for these last words.

3. Mutual Attitudes of Christ and the Jewish Rulers and Others
John 12:37-50

The Apostle John, who recorded this last scene, felt that these final words of Jesus were an assurance that the net results of His work with the Jews had been exactly what God had foreseen, and definitely recorded in the ancient words of Isaiah the Prophet. Those net results were of two kinds. Most of the leaders had confirmed themselves in the sin of blindness and rejection. Many, however, had a secret faith in Christ, which they feared to confess openly. They had not the courage to meet the threat of being cast out of the synagogue by the Pharisees, and thus to lose the praise of men, which they loved more than the glory of God.

(1) Prophetic Program thus Fulfilled
John 12:37-43
Isaiah 53:1; 6-10

To them, therefore, in His very last words, Christ issued His ultimatum of faith. These words of Jesus, spoken, as they were no doubt, with deep feeling on the part of Jesus, need no special commentary. Every one will note the particular force which these words acquire from the fact that they were the very last recorded words of Christ's strictly public ministry. Jesus cried and said:

(2) Christ's Ultimatum of Faith
John 12:44-50

"He that believeth on Me, believeth not on Me, but on Him That sent Me. And he that beholdeth Me beholdeth Him That sent Me. I am come a Light into the world, that whosoever believeth on Me may not abide in darkness. And if any man hear My sayings, and keep them not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My sayings, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I spake not from Myself; but the Father Which sent Me, He hath given Me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that His commandment is life eternal: the things therefore which I speak, even as the Father hath said unto Me, so I speak."

These were Christ's last words to the public. In them He asserted His oneness with His Father in point of divine nature and divine mission. He affirmed Himself to be the source of light (truth) in the world, and of eternal life. He declared that His single purpose in the world was to save the world. For that purpose He had come, and had exhibited His Divine nature to men, so that they might believe unto the saving of their souls.

He solemnly announced the inflexibility of the truth which He had proclaimed. Before that truth men must stand or fall in judgment: for it has all the authority of its origin from God the Father Himself. Finally, He gave definite assurance to them who hear and heed His word: "And I know that His commandment is life eternal."

With that assurance, Jesus took final leave of the multitude, on that eventful Tuesday evening. Thus He closed His strictly public ministry. Henceforth, until His arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane, His interests, as will appear in the following chapters, were devoted to His own Apostles.

CHAPTER XIX

THE FALLING NATION AND THE RISING KINGDOM

"The whole Land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end." *Jeremiah 4:27.*

"Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded unto this day (according as it is written, 'God hath given them the spirit of slumber,') Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness? Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: that blindness (hardness) in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." *Romans 11:7-25.*

On Tuesday evening¹ of the Passion Week, when Jesus left the Temple, as described in the preceding chapter, He went out with the Apostles toward the village of Bethany. That departure marked the close of Christ's free intercourse with the Jews as a Nation. Henceforth the Nation and the People were objective to Him and to His thought. The remainder of His time, so far as the Records have shown, from that departure until His arrest at an early hour on Friday morning, was spent in scenes of privacy with the Apostles.

The Lord's thoughts, as usual in such scenes, centered then in His Kingdom, the prospect of which He discussed with the Apostles, both in its earthly and in its heavenly aspects. During Tuesday evening, and the earlier parts of Thursday evening, Christ devoted His thoughts more especially to the earthly, and outward, and temporal aspects of His Kingdom, and especially as it was related to the approaching Fall of Jerusalem, and to other subsequent events. During the later hours of Thursday evening, Christ dealt almost exclusively with the heavenly aspects of His Kingdom and with the inner principles of the Spirit, and with the spiritual life and power, which, when all should work together, should bring the Kingdom in the present world to its heavenly consummation.

These effective principles of the Kingdom will be considered in the next chapter. The present chapter is concerned with the

¹The Jewish day began at sunset. However, for sake of clearness in translating these events into terms of modern thought, the time-element has also been translated. Therefore the days of the Passion Week will be spoken of, in this and the following chapters, as beginning and ending at mid-night.

events of Tuesday evening, and of the early hours of Thursday evening. During this time, the Gospel records are concerned with the old order of the Kingdom and the new. The negative phase of this interesting question was the Fall of Jerusalem, and the breaking up of the Jewish Nation, as described by Christ. In those tragic events the old national organization of God's Kingdom in the world was brought to an end. The positive phase is seen in the celebration of the Passover and the Lord's Supper, wherein the permanent spiritual elements of the old order are conserved, and made to function in the new spiritual Kingdom of Christ in the world.

IV. Tuesday Evening²—Christ's Discourse on the Fall of Jerusalem; and the Conspiracy of Judas

The negative events, which were two in number, occurred on Tuesday evening. They exhibit the external fact, and the inner principle of the clearing away of the old order. The first of these events was the discourse of Christ on the Fall of Jerusalem. The old order of the Kingdom as an organized nation had served its purpose. Furthermore, that old organization had brought itself under judgment, by assuming an attitude of clearly defined opposition to the new order of the Kingdom of Christ, for which the old order had existed. Jesus therefore described the fate of the Jewish Nation, whose end was already in sight, showing that, beyond the fall of that nation, His own spiritual Kingdom would go on to its destined consummation. The records of this Tuesday evening close with an account of Judas Iscariot's conspiring with the rulers of the Jews to betray to them the Messiah of Israel. This event is logical at this point: for it was the first step in that last extreme perfidy of Israel which fully justified God's judgments upon that nation, and the transfer of His Kingdom from the Jews to other peoples.

1. *Christ's Discourse on the Fall of Jerusalem, and the Future of His Kingdom in the World.* This discourse was given in

Christ's Discourse
Matthew 24:1—25:46
Mark 13:1-37; 11:19
Luke 21:5-38

answer to a question of the Apostles concerning a prophecy which Jesus had spoken about the Fall of Jerusalem. While He and the Apostles were going out from the Temple at the close of the day, the Apostles had

paused in the streets of the city to look back upon the Temple,

²The numbering of the time-elements, as here, will continue, in this and the next chapters, the series that was begun in the preceding chapter. These are the major time-divisions of the Passion Week.

which was then aglow with its evening splendor. One of them called the Lord's attention to the magnificence of the scene, saying, "Master, behold, what manner of stones and what manner of buildings!"

To that expression of wonder and admiration, Jesus gave this unexpected reply: "Seest thou these great buildings? There shall not be left here one stone upon another, which shall not be hrown down."

These solemn words made a deep impression on the minds and hearts of the Apostles. The group left the City, by the East Gate, and crossed the Brook Kedron, to the Mount of Olives, where they sat down for a while to rest. But these prophetic words of Jesus about the destruction of the Temple continued to disturb the minds of the Apostles. At length their anxious concern prevailed over their silent wonder. Then four of them, possibly by some sort of agreement, "Peter and James and John and Andrew, asked (Jesus) privately" for an explanation.³ "Tell us," they asked, "when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

It will be observed that the Apostles really asked three questions. They asked about the Fall of the City, and the Coming of Christ, and the End of the World. In answer to this composite inquiry, the Lord Jesus gave the extended address which is now to be considered.

Christ spoke, in His reply, first of the Signs that should precede His own Coming, and the ushering in of His Kingdom in the world. In His very first words, as if to anticipate the confusion that should arise from any effort of men to dogmatize on the basis of this discourse, the Lord warned the world in these words: "Take heed that no man lead you astray. For many shall come in My Name, saying, 'I am Christ'; and shall lead many astray."

Beginning with this reference to false *christs* that should arise to mislead the people, Jesus outlined the kinds of events and sufferings that should come upon the world, and upon the workers of His Kingdom, while that Kingdom was coming to pass in the world. Men have spent much time trying to identify in history the various things here

³This question was asked by the first and most active group of the Apostles. Possibly they were most alert to the situation of Israel. Perhaps they were appointed to ask this question. The order of their names is interesting. Compare the groups, as studied in Chapter VI.

mentioned by the Lord; but they will be noticed here only in general outline, as perhaps, after all, expressive only of great working forces in human history.

Among the "signs" here mentioned are the following: wars and political troubles, physical commotions and disturbances in the natural world, legal persecutions and universal hatred, family divisions because of faith, false prophets to deceive men, moral corruption and great apostasy from the truth and love of God, and the universal testimony of the Gospel before the end shall come. In this mighty stir of the world, in which the world itself shall be divided into opposing forces, for and against the Kingdom of Christ, the keeping power of God shall be securely about His own. (*Luke 21:18*) "In your patience," said Jesus, "ye shall win your souls"; for "he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved."

From these general signs, which doubtless express working principles for all time, Christ turned to the more definite signs that should attend His Coming. Here He spoke, in a negative way, of the destruction of Jerusalem. "But when ye see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that her desolation is at hand." After this general statement, He elaborated upon the fearful-

(2) Special Signs
at Christ's Coming
Matthew 24:15-31
Mark 13:14-27
Luke 21:20-28

ness of the doom that was about to overtake that once sacred City. There are three points in His description which stand out above the physical horrors described. The first is that these horrors, which appear as the scourge of divine wrath, are still under the control of God. "For the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." The second point is that these future events were foretold in great detail, so that the Apostles, amid the worst that might befall the Nation and the Jewish people, might still keep their courage steadfast, and their faith firm in God. Finally, this national calamity was in the progressive program of Christ's Kingdom in the world: for the Jews "shall be led captive into all the nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

These words give the perspective of events. The Fall of Jerusalem was neither to accompany, nor to herald as near at hand, the incoming of the Kingdom of Christ. It only opened the way for a long sequence of spiritual effort and of final triumph for the Kingdom in the world, first with the Gentiles, and ultimately with the Jews. The beginning was then; the coming was to be gradual; the appointed triumph was to be universal. The consum-

mation, also assured, is to be amid heavenly, and not earthly, demonstrations. After the tribulations and the commotions are past,

"Then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in the Heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of Heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send forth His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of Heaven to the other."

Thus Christ surveyed, to the end of all time, the inner principles of the world's history. At this point He dropped this thread of thought, and turned to another phase of the original inquiry; but the new phase of the subject will lead Him again, in the last section of this discourse, to this thought of the end of the world*

"When shall these things be?" the Apostles had asked, as the first element in their inquiry. Christ gave no definite notes of

2. **Exact Time Not
Made Known**
Matthew 24:32-42
Mark 13:28-37
Luke 21:29-36

time. He made, in fact, no definite discrimination as to time between the Fall of Jerusalem, the incoming of His Kingdom, and the end of the world. In His thought there was no very wide separation of these things. As He viewed the total situation, the Fall of

Jerusalem was the end of the old dispensation, and the beginning of the spiritual triumph of His Kingdom in the world. This event was therefore the beginning of the end of all earthly things. Christ was most concerned for the moral effect of these facts, and He so stated them as to impress the great need of moral and spiritual preparation upon the Jews then, and upon all the world to the end of time.

The coming of the Kingdom was a fact for which men should constantly look. So also was the coming of the attending events of immediate and more remote judgment.

(1) **Time, a Matter
of Expectation
and Certainty**

The moral force of these things was touching every life then, and is doing so now. That was the moral obligation which Christ re-in-

forced by the Parable of the Fig Tree, whose new growth of tender branches and leaves was a harbinger of summer. Already, as He pointed out then, the evidences of transition to the new and final dispensation of His Kingdom, and of the judgments inci-

**Parable of
the Fig Tree**

*See below, the discussion of *Matthew 25:31-46*.

dent thereto, were plain to those who had eyes to see. Furthermore, the time was certain: certain, as a matter of fact, for that generation: for all of those things, in some measure, should have, and did have, fulfilment in that generation. No word of God, in point of fact, has ever failed.

The Apostles, as already stated, had asked a three-fold question, about the Fall of Jerusalem, the Coming of Christ, and the End of the World. Christ discussed the three topics together, passing in thought from one to the other in such way that the complexity of His thought cannot now be untangled so as to say with certainty when He spoke of this and when of that topic. This is especially true of *Matthew 24:34*, wherein Jesus said, "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled."

What exactly did Jesus mean in these words? Three answers have been offered. (1) Some have supposed that He spoke only of the Destruction of Jerusalem; and that "all these things" were fulfilled when Titus, in 70 A.D., destroyed that city. But this view is obviously inadequate. (2) Some have held that a part of this prophecy referred to the Fall of the City, and a part to the End of the World; and that Jesus, perhaps by some gesture or tone of voice, separated one part of His thought from the other while He was speaking; and that each part of the prophecy was to be fulfilled in its own time. Thus a distinction is made by some between the "all these things" (v. 34), as applied to the City, and the other things of "that day" (v. 36) of His Own Coming. (3) Some have understood Jesus as speaking here of both events; and that "all these things" did have a first fulfilment in the Fall of the City, and they will have a larger fulfilment in the End of the World.

Either the second or the third explanation above was probably true. This is the more likely in view of the double warning which Jesus wished to give at this time. The Lord never gratified mere speculative curiosity. His answers were practical. Thus, when asked about the number saved, He said in reply, "Strive to enter in." Here also, being asked about the *time* and the *signs*, He replied, "Take heed that no man deceive you." Obviously the Lord desired to warn the Apostles, at that time, of two intellectual dangers that lay directly before them.

First, He warned them against the danger of identifying His spiritual Kingdom with the old organized Judaism. They were disposed to hold on to that idea to the last, and even suggested it

on the occasion of the Lord's Ascension. If they persisted in that view, then their faith would be shattered in the impending national catastrophe. Therefore Jesus warned them against this error, lest that calamity engulf their faith. The Nation should fail and fall; but His Kingdom in the hearts of men would go on triumphantly, and with stronger faith when His disciples should see this fearful fulfillment of His Own prophecy concerning the falling Nation.

Furthermore, Jesus warned the Apostles against the paralyzing error of supposing that His Own Coming should be in the near future, or that any person could know the time of His Coming. He therefore declared "that day and that hour" to be known only to His Father. Jesus desired activity in His Kingdom. As respects the moral and spiritual responsibilities involved in His Coming, these final events were then, and are always, imperatively near to all men. Jesus wanted immediate and persistent preparation. Spiritual catastrophe must not come upon men unprepared. The fall of a soul is far greater than the fall of a city.

That was the moral truth of this complicated passage. To make this moral impression lasting, the Lord linked His thought of that national catastrophe inseparably with His thought of the Final Judgment. As long as the Gospel endures men must think of the two things together. The old order of Judaism had forsaken God, and rejected His Son; and it was therefore destined for an early and fearful ruin. The same impending doom, infinitely magnified, awaited men in the new order of His Kingdom if they failed, by faith and watchful effort, to prepare and to keep prepared for the Coming of the Lord Jesus at any day and any hour.

This complex passage is beyond human power to untangle; but the moral and spiritual effect of it has been very great. Probably both results were divinely intended. The national calamity portrayed by Jesus is now a matter of history. The Final Judgment described by Him is yet to come. The consequent duty which Jesus here defined is both clear and pressing, and universal. This complex passage, as it now stands, has combined prophecy, prophecy fulfilled, and human experience on a large scale, to emphasize the basic responsibility of individual life. In this respect, this complex prophecy is without an equal in all literature. Among human tragedies, the Flood, which Jesus immediately mentions, alone approximates the catastrophes here described and certified. Viewed thus in the light of its moral purpose, this entire passage,

including the complications as intentional, is well worthy of Divine Inspiration.

The time when these things shall be consummated is unknown to any, except to the Father in Heaven. That fact Jesus taught with emphasis. He taught also two other facts. First, He affirmed that the time shall come upon men as a matter of great surprise. As the judgment of God fell upon an unsuspecting, secular-minded, and unprepared world, in the days of Noah, when "the Flood came and took them all away; so shall be the coming of the Son of Man." Further, He affirmed that the time of the coming of Christ's Kingdom would be a time of separations, even among those who are most intimately associated in the interests and affairs of this present life: "one shall be taken, and another left" in that day.

The solemn duty of being prepared was thus arrived at. "Watch therefore: for ye know not on what day your Lord cometh." "Take heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is." "But take heed to yourselves," as Luke gives the full injunction, "lest haply your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that day come on you suddenly as a snare: for so shall it come upon all them that dwell on the face of all the earth. But watch ye at every season, making supplication, that ye may prevail to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."

Jesus not only impressed this truth thus by repetition, but He also continued to deepen that impression by giving three extended parables, bearing upon the need of preparation for His Coming, and for the appearance of men before Him in the final Judgment of the World.

First, in the Parable of the Unfaithful Servant, Christ laid stress upon the absolute need of preparation, and of being always prepared for the Lord's Coming. "But know this," said Christ, "that if the master of the house had known in what watch the thief was coming, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken through. Therefore be ye also ready: for in an hour that ye think not the Son of Man cometh." "Watch there-

(3) Time, a Matter
of Surprise and
of Separations
Cf. Luke 17:26-37

3. Duty of Watch-
fulness and
Preparation
Matthew 24:42
Mark 13:33
Luke 21:34-36

(1) Parable of the
Unfaithful Servant
Matthew 24:43-51
Mark 13:34-37
Cf. Luke 12:42-48

fore: . . . lest coming suddenly, He find you sleeping."
 "And what I say unto you I say unto all, *Watch!*"⁵

"Who then," said Christ, "is the faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath set over his household, to give them their food in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, that he will set him over all that he hath. But if that evil servant shall say in his heart, 'My lord tarrieth;' and shall begin to beat his fellow-servants, and shall eat and drink with the drunken; the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he expecteth not, and in an hour when he knoweth not, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth."

There is here a general principle for all to follow. Men must meet the responsibilities of Christ's Kingdom, and so keep themselves prepared to meet Him at any time.

b. Application of the Parable There was, and is, a special application of this parable to the leadership of Christ's Kingdom in the world. To the leaders was committed the highest of all responsibilities, that of feeding the flock of Christ. To this high calling they must be faithful until the Lord's return.

Two dangers have always beset the leadership of Christ's Kingdom. Both are especially guarded against in the details of this parable. The one danger was that of lording

c. Special Dangers to the Kingdom it over the Lord's heritage. That danger is exhibited in the cruelty of the unfaithful servant, who exalted himself by the usurpation and the abuse of power and authority. The other danger is that of moral decline, exhibited here in the details of luxury and drunkenness. These warnings, when the situation is fully analyzed, are seen to touch dangers that are fundamental in the working of the Kingdom of Christ; and, since He spoke this parable to the Apostles, there is little doubt that He intended them to make this extra application to themselves as leaders in the work of His Kingdom.

Jesus next spoke the Parable of the Ten Virgins. Through this story He pointed out, incidentally again, the uncertainty of the time, and centrally, the certain fate that awaits those whom that uncertain time shall find unprepared. The

⁵"*Watch!*" This is the injunction which Christ most often repeated. He desired men to watch against error and sin, and to watch for the opportunities of righteousness and service.

facts of the parable, which is possibly the most familiar of them all, do not need to be told at this time.

The central truth is very impressive. The division point among the Ten Virgins was at the point of wisdom and folly. It was

**Central Truth
of the Parable**

with them a question of being prepared, or of being unprepared. Possibly Christ intended to suggest that the folly of the foolish virgins consisted in their supposing that they could prepare after the bridegroom had come. That was what they did try to do. But the result was fatal. The door was shut. Now is the only time to prepare for Christ, and for His coming in judgment. The duty of life, as seen in this parable, is to be prepared, and, by watchful care, to stay prepared at all times. "Watch therefore," said Christ, in His conclusion to this story, "for ye know not the day nor the hour."

As the last of the series, Jesus spoke the Parable of the Talents. In it He suggested the kind and the degree of preparation which

**(3) Parable of
the Talents
Matthew 25:14-30**

God expects men to make. This parable is also familiar in all of its details. Attention will therefore be given immediately to the central truth of the parable, and to observations on certain applications of that truth.

The central truth of the parable is this: Men and women are endowed with certain abilities and gifts that are usable in the

**a. Central Truth
of the Parable**

Kingdom and work of the Lord. God lays upon men and women duties and responsibilities, in life and in His Kingdom, that are in keeping both in kind and in amount, with those gifts and abilities. Then God expects returns from men and women that are commensurate with those powers and those duties. To meet this expectation, is to be prepared. To measure up in full to this standard, is to have the full approval of God, and to receive a full reward at His hands. Abilities, opportunities, and responsibilities, are inseparably co-ordinated in the Kingdom and service of Christ; and God requires results that are fully commensurate and consistent with this co-ordination.

But to fail under this test, is to fail entirely. There is no excuse for a man not using what ability he has in the service: and that

**b. Test of Talents
Final in Life**

is all that God requires in life. This test requires, however, that a man be himself, and not some other person: that he use his own talents, in the full sincerity and integrity of his own soul. The very terms of an excuse for not meeting this test, in the nature

of the case, become the law of judgment before which the excuser of himself stands condemned. This result is right and just, even if failing talents meant only the loss of accomplishment in the service of God.

But there is another phase of this question to be reckoned with always. The failure of talents to function means sin. To fail in

**c. Failing Talents
Add Sin to Life**

this talent-test of life, is to acquire condemnation for additional guilt. The parable is plain and strong on this point. God resolves such failure to a question of sloth, and then identifies sloth with wickedness. There is no escape, in the last analysis of life and service, from the truth of this principle set forth in the parable.

The failure of talents to function impoverishes life. This is true in respect to the outward and material interests of life: for this principle is one of universal application.

**d. Failing Talents
Impoverish Life**

"From him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away." Without gaining something, one does actually lose what he has: he is spending his principal, and living upon his capital stock. Failing talents also bankrupt the moral and spiritual life. Such failure robs one of moral powers, and closes the door of opportunity in life. Hence the summary spirit in which the judgment is pronounced upon the unprofitable servant in the parable.

Having discussed the time of His Coming, and the principles of preparation which men should observe in view of that Coming,

**3. Christ's Description
of the Final
Judgment
Matthew 25:31-46**

Jesus returned to His previous line of thought concerning the end of the world, and gave a closing picture of the Final Judgment, when He should come in glory to judge all peoples of the earth, and to assign them to their eternal rewards of life or of death.

Christ gave first a graphic description of the setting of that great final event, in which all Heaven and Earth, all time and eternity, are seen to be interested. "But

**(1) Graphic Setting
of the Judgment
Matthew 25:31-33
Cf. Acts 17:30-31**

when the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then shall He sit on the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all the nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats: and He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left."

Then follow the words of divine judgment, which are few in number: for the basis of judgment is definite. To the righteous, thus separated from the wicked, Christ, Who is both King and Judge of the world, will say: "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave Me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me in; naked, and ye clothed Me: I was sick, and ye visited Me: I was in prison, and ye came unto Me."

But to the wicked Christ shall say: "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the Devil and his angels." To them, the Lord, continuing His words of judgment, shall deny the merits of having done those things for which He had so generously commended the righteous.

These judgments were final; but the words of Jesus were protested by both the parties judged. The righteous protested that they never knew that they had rendered such services to their Lord and Savior. (2) **Words of Final Judgment**
Matthew 25:34-36, and 25:41-43
"Surely," they argued in effect, "there must be some mistake about these statements." But Jesus explained that all was correct, even as He had said. "Inasmuch," He said, "as ye did it unto one of these My brethren, even these least, ye did it unto Me." Thus Christ described the final test of true religion as an application of those same principles in terms of which He had, in the beginning of His ministry, defined true religion. That test was the integrity of a supreme love to God, which must express itself in an active service to men.

But the wicked also protested. They protested that they had never known the Lord to be in need of that ministry for failure in respect to which the Lord had judged them. But in His reply, the Lord Jesus again identified Himself with the world of need. In that way He declared unsatisfactory to God any religion or faith that does not produce a service of love to those who are in need. (3) **Protest of the Righteous**
Matthew 25:37-40

These bases of judgment are entirely just. Faith without works is dead: for a living faith works by love. Those who are here condemned admit that they had not seen the opportunities for

⁶Compare *James* 1:27; Chapter IV above; *Galatians* 5:6, *Matthew* 22:36-40; *Luke* 10:25-37; and *I. Corinthians* 13:1-13.

service which God had laid before them; and they offer that failure as an excuse to the Lord. In so doing, they put themselves into the exact position of the "wicked and slothful servant" of the parable which the Lord had spoken only a few moments before. Having thus failed in the divine essential of love, those condemned were rightly judged to be fit only for the loveless association of the Devil and his angels.

The last sentence of this description, completing the picture of the Final Judgment, marks the eternal separation of the righteous

(5) Eternal Separation of the Righteous and the Wicked
Matthew 25:46

Cf. 2. Thes. 1:6-10

and the wicked. The wicked "shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life." This is the final fact of the Final Judgment: the gathering apart of His own people, and the taking of them to their eternal home with God in Heaven.⁷ With

this final thought, which reached into Eternity, far beyond the sufferings which He had previously portrayed, the Lord Jesus brought to a close His extended answer to the original question of the Apostles concerning the Fall of Jerusalem, the Coming of Christ, and the End of the World.

2. *The Conspiracy of Judas Iscariot to Betray Jesus.* It was still Tuesday evening. Probably the evening was far spent by the time the Lord Jesus had completed His long prophetic discourse to the Apostles. Somewhere in the course of the day, probably during their movements about the Temple after the conflicts of the day were over, Judas Iscariot had left the company of the other Apostles, and had gone away to bargain with the enemies of the Lord for betraying Him into their hands.

The general background of this conspiracy had three particular outstanding facts. There was the multitude of the people who

1. Background of This Conspiracy

had come to the Feast of the Passover, and among whom Jesus was held in high esteem.

There was the daily program of Jesus. There was the secret working of sinister motives in the hearts of His enemies, who were now perplexed, but more determined than ever in their opposition, because He had outdone them, and left them defeated in all of their attacks upon Him during that day.

The regular daily program of Jesus was given special mention at this time. His day He spent in the Temple with the people.

⁷The thought here supplements that of the Parable of the Drag-Net, wherein were caught all manner of fish, but the good were kept and the bad were thrown away. There the purging of the Kingdom was from within: here it is separation between the true Kingdom and all the world besides. See Chapter XI, pages 247-248.

At evening time, He retired, for the nights, to Bethany, or more often, perhaps, to a favorite place on the Mount of Olives, for prayer. That place of prayer, as some have conjectured, may have been in the Garden of Gethsemane, whither the traitor Judas went, later in the week, to find the Lord Jesus.

(1) Daily Move-
ments of Jesus
Luke 21:37-38
Cf. Mark 11:19

Of the Lord's daily movements, Luke has said, "And every day He was teaching in the Temple; and every night He went out, and lodged in the mount that is called the Mount of Olives. And all the people came early in the morning to Him in the Temple, to hear Him."

The chief priests and the elders of the people were also busy. After they had failed in their attacks upon Jesus, they called a council to decide what they should try to do next. After the attacks, these enemies of the Lord gathered their routed forces, and went to Caiaphas, the High Priest; "and they took counsel together that they might take Jesus by subtilty and kill Him. But they said, 'Not during the feast, lest a tumult arise among the people.'" But while they thus sat perplexed, not knowing how safely to proceed with their plans of hatred and murder, another chain of events was taking place which would soon help to solve safely their perplexing problem.

Satan had entered into Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve.⁸ He had forsaken his fellow-apostles, and was now entering this council of the Jews, to bargain with them for the betrayal of Jesus into their hands. "What are ye willing to give me," said Judas, "and I will deliver Him unto you?"

2. Traitor's Bargain
Made by Judas
Matthew 26:14-16
Mark 14:10-11
Luke 22:3-6

When the rulers of the Jews heard this offer, they were glad, and quickly weighed out to Judas thirty pieces of silver. Judas accepted the money, and from that time he sought opportunity to deliver Jesus into the hands of His enemies in the absence of the multitude; for the rulers of the Jews lived then in personal and political fear of the people, who loved Jesus, and had once gone so far as to try to make Him their King.⁹ The rulers feared most of all a tumult of the people which might call down the wrath of the Roman Government upon the Jewish Nation. The results of this bargain of Judas will appear in the subsequent story of the Passion Week.

⁸See the study of Judas on pages 140-141, 261, 313-314, 437, 485-486, 518-522, 541.

⁹See Chapter XI, pages 251-254.

V. Wednesday, and Thursday Forenoon—No Record

The records are silent concerning the happenings on Wednesday, and on Thursday until possibly some time in the afternoon.

**Suggestive
Statements
Mark 11:19
Luke 21:37-38**

Christ next appeared in the recorded history, when He began, on Thursday afternoon, to direct the preparation for the Passover, which He was to eat with His Apostles in the Upper Room on that evening. At that re-appearance, Jesus was coming toward the City, as it seems, either from Bethany, or from some place on the Mount of Olives.

What Jesus did during this period of silent records, no one knows. Some have supposed, on the basis of the marginal references above, that He continued His usual custom of visiting the City and the Temple on these days. Others have supposed that He spent these days in retirement and prayer. Still others have supposed that He spent these days in quiet rest with His friends in Bethany. Against the idea of His customary visit to the Temple, is the fact, as seen in the previous outlines, that He had brought His work with the Jews as a People and Nation to its logical conclusion in the closing events of Tuesday and Tuesday evening. What Jesus did on these days cannot now be known. He left the scene, perhaps late in the evening, on Tuesday, and re-appeared, perhaps late in the afternoon, on Thursday.

VI. Thursday Afternoon and Evening—Celebration of the Jewish Passover and the Christian Communion

On Thursday afternoon, as already suggested, Jesus came again into view, directing the preparation for the celebration of the Jewish Passover, which was followed, on that evening, by the inauguration of the Christian Communion, or Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, as it is frequently called.¹⁰ From the records, it seems that the Apostles had been separated from Jesus on this Thursday; for they "came to Jesus," and asked Him, saying, "Where

¹⁰From *Matthew* 26:1-2, which Jesus spoke on Tuesday evening, it appears that He counted forward two days, (that is, Wednesday, and Thursday until after sunset, when Friday began) as the regular time for the Passover. The Paschal Supper was to be eaten before the morning of the fifteenth of the month Nisan. The passover lamb was slain, and the preparation was made, on the day before, which was the Friday of this Passion Week. Domestic preparation, in the matter of removing all leaven from the homes, was made on the afternoon of the thirteenth of Nisan, or Thursday, which was, for this reason, at this time, called "the first day of unleavened bread." From these facts, it would seem that Christ's re-appearance was certainly on the afternoon of Thursday. It appears further that Christ had ordered this Paschal Supper to

wilt Thou that we make ready for Thee to eat the Passover?" The very form of that question, with its emphasis upon the Lord Himself, would seem to suggest, in view of circumstances discussed below, that Christ had already been talking to the Apostles about His particular desire to eat the Passover with them on that Thursday evening.

In reply to this general question from the Apostles, Jesus commanded Peter and John,¹¹ saying, "Go and make ready for us the Passover, that we may eat." They asked again, "Where wilt Thou that we make ready?" Jesus, in reply, directed them carefully how to find the large Upper Room¹²

**Peter and John
Prepare for
the Passover**

which He had selected as the place for this celebration. They went, as He directed, and found the place, by following the man with the pitcher of water; and there they made ready for the Passover Supper.

This particular Passover brings to an end the old order of God's Kingdom in the world. The Communion Service, at the close of the Passover Supper, belongs distinctly to the new order of the Kingdom of Christ. The two celebrations, following one upon the other, as they do, symbolize the passing over, from the old to the new, of all that is spiritually significant. They show also an analogous change in the point of view, and in the prospect, of the new order

**Historical
Perspective on the
Two Services on
This Occasion**

be prepared one day in advance of the regular Passover of the Jews. This fact gives rise, as some suppose, to the explanation which Christ gave in *Luke* 22:15-16; for at the regular time of the Passover, He Himself, "our Passover," as Paul explains, would be "sacrificed for us." (*1. Corinthians* 5:7). For the law of the Passover, see *Exodus* 12:43-51; and *Numbers* 9:1-14.

¹¹Peter and John appeared on this occasion, for the first time, isolated from James, as in the old grouping of the "inner circle" of the three. Later these two Apostles were intimately associated in the activities of the Early Church. (Cf. *Acts* 3:1; 4:13; 8:14). Compare the earlier grouping of the Apostles, as studied in Chapter VI. There is an obvious similarity between this preparation for the Passover, and that for the Triumphal Entry, in Chapter XVIII; but there was no suggestion given in the records of that earlier event as to the names of the apostles whom Jesus sent, on that occasion, to secure for Him the ass and the colt.

¹²This Upper Room has become associated, by fact and conjecture, with many events in the early history of the Church. This house is supposed to have been at that time the home of John Mark, then a young man, who later wrote the Gospel bearing his name. The man carrying the pitcher of water is supposed to have been John's father, whom the Apostles, Peter and John, followed into the house. From this supper, John Mark is supposed to have followed Jesus and the Apostles into the Garden of Gethsemane (*Mark* 14:51, 52). To this Upper Room, according to tradition, the Apostles returned after the Ascension to engage in the ten days of prayer for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (*Acts* 1:13). Thither Peter went, after his deliverance from prison, and found the disciples gathered there and praying for his release (*Acts* 12:12). It was in that home, probably, that Mark was converted by Peter (*1. Peter* 5:13). Probably, also, it was there that Barnabas came into his first contact with the Apostles, and was converted (*Acts* 4:36-37; and *Colossians* 4:10). Probably Paul, when accompanied by Barnabas, lodged in this home while in Jerusalem (*Acts* 15:2). It is generally supposed that Mark had in this home that intimate association with Peter which seems to be reflected so clearly in the *Gospel by Mark*. This Gospel itself may have been written in this same Upper Room.

of the Kingdom. Under the old order, men stood, as it were, on the first promises, and looked through national hopes to the Advent of the Promised Savior. Under the new order, men stand, as it were, on the solid facts of a first Advent, and look through world-wide spiritual conquests of His Kingdom to the Second Coming of Christ. The Passover pointed to a means: the Communion points to an end.

I. The Passover ("The Last Supper"). Peter and John made the necessary preparations. "And when it was evening He cometh with the Twelve." They probably assembled at once around the table, sitting, or reclining, as was the custom in that day. The first act of Christ was to justify their holding the Passover Feast on that evening, which was one day in advance of the regular calendar date of that event. This exception He justified by explaining His own very great desire to eat this Last Supper with His Apostles before His own Death on the next day. "With desire have I desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you, I will not eat it, until it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God." After these initial words of Jesus, there were four events, up to the end of the Supper, that claimed central attention on that occasion.

The first of these central events was the contention about greatness. It must have been early in the evening that there arose among the Apostles a contention as to "which of them is accounted to be greatest." Perhaps the discourse of Jesus, on the previous Tuesday evening, concerning His Kingdom, had stimulated the thought of the Apostles in the direction of this question. Possibly also they had been separated from Jesus during Wednesday and Thursday morning, and, on this point, had developed a spirit of strife and debate, which broke out anew when they came together again on this evening occasion. Whatever the causes, the contention was on, possibly in a spirited manner; and Jesus had again to clarify their minds and hearts on the important questions of humility, service, and exaltation within the Kingdom of God.¹³

Therefore Jesus again taught them, who were to teach all the world, this truth, that in self-sacrifice and service is the secret of all true greatness. By contrast, Christ pointed out the manner of

¹³Compare *Matthew* 20:25-27; 23:11; *Mark* 9:35; 10:42-45, and the previous discussions of these passages.

heathen rulers, who strive for lordship over men, and thus seek to exalt themselves. Such self-exalting rulers call themselves "Benefactors." To that custom, which was void of all truth, Jesus pointed with effective irony. But no such principles are to be followed in the Kingdom of Christ. In that Kingdom, men humble themselves in order to rise. Exaltation is by the merits that inhere in service alone. Even the Son of God was in the world "as He that serveth."

**(1) Self-Sacrifice
the Secret of
Greatness
Luke 22:25-30**

The Apostles were contending, in a small way, about greatness. But they had a true foundation already laid, in their fidelity to Christ, for a greatness that was far different from that for which they had been striving. To that better hope and prospect of their lives Christ turned their attention. For this

**a. True Great-
ness of the
Apostles**

present life, theirs was the greatness of a kingdom over the hearts and spirits of men:—a kingdom of power and service, which has grown from the improbabilities of that day to the world-wide influence of to-day. Beyond this present life, their rewards, as assured, were to be both ordinary and extraordinary. They would enjoy the heavenly feasts, in common with all the redeemed of the Lord; and they would be exalted to distinction and honor, being enthroned as judges over the twelve tribes of Israel.

There was here a strong suggestion for Judas Iscariot, who was then present. All of these allusions to the loyalty of the Apostles, and to the present and eternal consequences of that loyalty, were in strong contrast with the traitor heart of Judas. It amounted to a

**b. First Suggestion
to Judas Iscariot**

clear reading of Judas out of the company. Probably Jesus meant thus to suggest to Judas that he excuse himself from the company of those who were loyal to the Lord. But the traitor did not leave at this suggestion, however uncomfortable he may have felt under these searching words of the Lord Jesus.

Then, as if to impress the truth He had taught, Jesus resorted to the rebuke which He expressed in an active example. He

**(2) Feet-Washing
—a Parable in
Action
John 13:1-11**

arose from the table, and set Himself to the lowly service of washing the feet of the Apostles. John introduced this humble action on the part of the Son of God, by giving a solemn emphasis upon the conscious Divinity that dwelt in Jesus at that moment. He knew that His hour was come. He knew the method of treason, which was then in the heart of Judas. Christ knew His own divine resources,

and the nature and origin and destiny of His commission from His Father. In a word, Jesus Christ was fully aware, at that moment, that he was the Son of God.

Yet, with that consciousness vivid in His mind, the Son of God arose from the table, before the supper, and began to wash the feet of the Apostles. The protest of Peter, against this lowly action of His Lord and Master, was both natural and logical, as seen from Peter's limited point of view. But

a. Divine Humility of Jesus

Jesus, who saw deeper into the truth, meant more by this acted-out parable than the thought that had entered Peter's mind. As a result of this altercation with Peter, Jesus announced the deeper truth symbolized in His action: that, if men would not allow this lowly service on the part of the Son of God as Savior, they were hopeless: for the Son of God had humbled himself from Heaven as the only possible Savior of the world.

The washing signified cleansing, as Jesus emphasized. So had His own cleansing touch upon the lives of the Apostles been effective, except in the case of Judas, the traitor. To this fact, with its marked exception, Jesus pointed, carefully avoiding to

b. Second Suggestion to Judas

call the name of Judas. Again Judas was read out of the company of those who had been cleansed and purified by the saving grace of Christ. But Judas again failed, or refused, to get the suggestion of his own exit from that otherwise sanctified situation.

"So when He had washed their feet, and taken His garments, and sat down again," He began to address them in a manner more

2. Christ's Formal Lesson on Humility John 13:12-20

formal than that in which He had spoken while engaged in His lowly service. "Know ye what I have done unto you?" This He asked by way of introducing His formal lesson on humility, which was the second central event of the evening.

"Ye call Me, 'Master,' and, 'Lord,'" Christ affirmed: "and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Master, have

(1) Divine Example of Humility

washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, A servant is not greater than his lord; neither one that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them."

Then Jesus announced the awful exception, and suggested His last appeal of hope to Judas Iscariot, the traitor. "I speak not of

you all," said Jesus: "I know whom I have chosen." There was a program of destiny in the plans of Judas. Those plans were known to God, and foretold, in ancient times.

(2) Third Suggestion to Judas
John 13:18-20

Those plans were, at this time, equally well known to the Son of God. About this fact, because of its evidential values, Jesus would have the Apostles thoroughly informed: for these facts, rightly understood, would in themselves prove Jesus to be Divine. Turning then squarely to Judas, as it would seem, Jesus made His final appeal in terms of the inseparable link between His Father and Himself and His Apostles. Again Judas, in the secret of his heart, must have felt himself read out of the company; yet he was not moved to take his departure.

Therefore it became necessary at last to do what Jesus seemed to be trying all the while to avoid doing: that was, formally to expel Judas Iscariot from the company then at the supper. Jesus had suggested several times that Judas withdraw: but it is remarkable how little the sinful are responsive to the finer suggestions of thought and action. The direct method of dealing with Judas became obviously necessary.

3. Expulsion of Judas Iscariot
Matthew 26:21-25
Mark 14:18-21
Luke 22:21-23
John 13:21-30

Jesus, therefore, being deeply moved in His spirit, began to say, "Verily I say unto you, One of you shall betray Me!" "For the Son of Man indeed goeth, as it hath been determined: but woe unto that man through whom He is betrayed!" The Apostles, startled by this announcement, "looked one upon another, doubting of whom He spake:" At length, one by one, they began to ask Him, "Is it I?" After a while, when Jesus had somewhat intensified the thought, Judas faltered forth, clumsily perhaps, the question, "Is it I, Rabbi?"

Matthew quoted Jesus as answering this question to Judas directly, in the affirmative. According to this record, Jesus said to Judas, "Thou hast said." This method of repeating the question in positive form, is the Greek (or oriental) equivalent of the modern "Yes." This affirmative may have been private to Judas. But the Apostles were still unsatisfied. Peter beckoned to John, who is generally supposed to be the one nearest to Jesus, to ask Him privately who it was that should betray Him. This John did: and Jesus, in reply, said, "He it is, for whom I shall dip the sop, and give it him." Then, as if refusing to call the

name of Judas, the Lord Jesus dipped the sop, and gave it to the traitor.

Exit Judas. But not until Satan, in a new and active sense, had entered into the traitor's heart. And not until after Jesus had said, "That thou doest, do quickly." By these words Jesus meant that Judas should go at once; but those present did not understand the saying. Judas alone understood. "He then having received the sop went out straightway: *and it was night.*" Probably there is no other statement in the entire Bible more suggestive than the four words with which the Apostle of Love has closed his account of this fatal departure. Behind this exit, there was, in the life of Judas, a history of low and sordid ideals, of which this exit was the fruitage. Beyond this departure lay three things: a deed of darkness, a moment of disillusion and remorse, and a destiny unspeakable. So Judas Iscariot, the Arch-Traitor of history, went out into the night!

(2) Exit Judas —into Night

When Judas was gone, Jesus and the other eleven Apostles began to eat the Passover Supper. There is no formal statement in the Gospel records about the actual eating of this supper. The inference is that, in point of the food provided, and the leisurely ceremony of the occasion, this Passover was like that commanded of God, and handed down from the days of Moses.¹⁴

4. Passover Supper Eaten by Jesus and the Eleven

The supper was leisurely partaken of; and it is quite probable that most of this Thursday evening was spent in this social religious festival. The Lord Jesus, as Divine Host, sat at the head of the table. There is little doubt that He led the conversation of the evening through many an interesting observation on the old order of God's Kingdom, explaining in detail the various forms and ceremonies connected with the Passover. It is almost certain also, that He explained, thus beforehand, the new sacrament of the Christian Communion which He expected to inaugurate at the close of this particular feast.

2. *The Christian Communion (The Sacrament of "The Lord's Supper.")* The last thought suggested above is more than mere

¹⁴For the original institution of the Passover, see *Exodus* 12:1-28. Time had changed many details. The whole family participated in the feast, sometimes two or more families uniting; but usage had fixed upon ten persons as sufficient to consume one lamb. The lamb, which was slain between 3 p. m. and 5 p. m., was roasted, and eaten with unleavened bread, and with certain bitter herbs, among which the Mishna enumerates endive, chicory, wild lettuce, and nettles. The table was laid with dishes peculiar to this solemn feast, each suggestive of some scene in the Great Deliverance. The guests reclined on couches covered with carpets. The occasion was highly social; although the peculiar forms and ceremonies of the supper kept the sacred character of the occasion always in mind.

conjecture: it is a matter of strong probability. The formal manner in which Jesus went through with the inauguration of the new Christian Communion Service argues convincingly that the ceremony was fully explained before He began, at least with respect to the nature and the purpose of what He was going to do. The event is marked by a grandeur in its very simplicity; and nothing more will be attempted here than merely to recite the facts of the inauguration of the Communion Service.

The formula used by Christ in the institution of this service was brief, simple, and direct. Probably, as already suggested, the service had been fully explained while the Passover Supper was in progress. The records state that, "as they were eating," probably at the close of the supper, Jesus took bread; and when He had given thanks, and had blessed it, He brake it, and gave it to His Apostles, and said,

THIS IS MY BODY WHICH IS GIVEN FOR YOU:
THIS DO IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME.

Then He took the cup, "in like manner after supper," as Luke says, and gave thanks, and gave it to the Apostles, saying to them the following words, according to the record of the event by Matthew, and the continuation of the formula given by Paul:

DRINK YE ALL OF IT;
FOR THIS IS MY BLOOD OF THE COVENANT,
WHICH IS SHED FOR MANY
UNTO REMISSION OF SINS:
THIS DO YE, AS OFT AS YE DRINK IT,
IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME.

FOR AS OFTEN AS YE EAT THIS BREAD,
AND DRINK THIS CUP,
YE DO SHOW THE LORD'S DEATH
TILL HE COME.

¹⁵John, who gave almost a whole chapter (13:1-30) to his detailed account of this Passover occasion, does not mention the inauguration of the Christian Communion at the close of that feast. The reason for this omission is obvious. John wrote his account of the Gospel in the year 90 A.D. By that time sixty years had passed since the inauguration of this Sacrament, and it had become fixed in the thought and practice of the Early Church. Moreover, in the Communion Service the formula given by Christ is important. But His words had already been given by others (by Paul in *I. Corinthians*, in 57 A.D.; by Matthew, in 58; by Luke, in 60; and by Mark, in 68); and John felt that these crystalized forms had no need of repetition in his records. Incidentally, it may be noticed, that, for the same reason, neither Mark nor John give any account of the Lord's Prayer. For the dates of the several books, see the list on page XV.

With these simple words the Son of God instituted this new Memorial, whose observance should be co-extensive with the

**Conclusion of
the Communion
Service**

Christian Dispensation of the world. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper points backward to the Covenant of Hope which was sealed by the Death of Christ, and forward to His Coming again in royal glory for the consummation of His Kingdom.

Thus this intimate scene in the Upper Room came to a close with the suggestion of a shadow, but also with the assurance of ultimate triumph. Christ, Who had thus accomplished His great desire for this Communion with His Apostles before His Death, looked beyond the shadows, and upon the glory, in His last words:

"I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's Kingdom."

And then, after He had spoken these final words, they sang a song, and went out to the Mount of Olives.

CHAPTER XX

THE LAST HOURS WITH THE APOSTLES

"Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Ye have heard how I said unto you, 'I go away, and come again unto you.' If ye loved Me, ye would rejoice, because I said, 'I go unto the Father.'" *John 14:27-28.*

"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord." *2. Timothy 1:7-8.*

"And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His Name." *Acts 5:41.*

"For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek. . . . for whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved." *Romans 10:12-13.*

This chapter surveys the events that occurred between the departure of Jesus, with the Eleven Apostles, from the Upper Room and His Arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane. This period marks the last hours which Jesus spent with the Apostles before His Trials and Crucifixion. During these hours, He talked to the Apostles mainly about the unseen and heavenly aspects of His Kingdom: how His Spirit should work in the hearts of men; and how the work of His spiritual Kingdom should culminate here and hereafter.

This chapter will bring under consideration two groups of events. The first group was the Farewell Addresses of Jesus, and His Intercessory Prayer, both of which occurred on Thursday night, soon after the departure from the Upper Room. The second group was the Agony in the Garden, at about the hour of midnight, and the Arrest of Jesus, soon after midnight on Friday morning. The general outline is continued from the previous chapters.

VII. Thursday Night—The Farewell Addresses and the Intercessory Prayer of Jesus

From the Upper Room, as suggested above, Jesus went, with the Eleven Apostles, out to the Mount of Olives. There they spent the time until about midnight. While they lingered on the Mount, perhaps pausing at some familiar point, the Lord Jesus delivered His Farewell Messages to the Apostles. This scene He

closed, before He retired to the Garden, with a fervent Prayer of Intercession to His Father in Heaven. The Lord's thought, as He spoke on that evening, seemed more and more to have arisen from the depths of His Divine Nature, and to partake of His Heavenly glory.

τ. Christ's Farewell Addresses. "Until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's Kingdom." In these last words of Jesus in the Upper Room, He sounded the keynote of His thought for the remainder of this last night with the Apostles, before His separation from them in His arrest, and trial, and death. The same general thought of spiritual fellowship in a spiritual Kingdom is felt in all of the Farewell Addresses to the

Apostles on that night.

During these discourses the mind and heart of Jesus were busy with the deeper interests of the unseen world of the Spirit, and with the problems of His own Kingdom in the hearts of men. His thoughts were of His Father and Himself in their divine relations and purposes; of His own disciples as related to their temptations, spiritual problems, and assurances; of the inner principles, and the indwelling Spirit, by which His followers must live and serve Him and His Father; and of the perfected joy that shall be to them, and to Him, and to His Father, when they shall have been gathered home to Himself eternally in Heaven. Christ spoke, in these last addresses, probably the most profound words of all His ministry; but His messages can be only summarized here in topical outlines.

Christ spoke first of His own Glorification, and of what was involved in that accomplishment. "Now is the Son of Man glorified," He began to say, "and God is glorified in Him; and God shall glorify Him in Himself, and straightway shall he glorify Him." In these words Christ was speaking of His own Death. But His thoughts were of Himself only as the Savior of those for whom He should die. For their sakes He was willing to die; for through them redeemed by the Cross His Death was the way of glory to Himself and to His Father in Heaven.

Therefore Jesus, at once, turned his thoughts affectionately to His Disciples, those "little children," whom He would soon leave behind in the valley of the shadows. He loved them, and knew their honest desire to exalt His glory. He told them, therefore,

Farewell Addresses

John 13:31-38

Matthew 26:31-35

Mark 14:27-31

Luke 22:31-38

John 14:1—16:33

1. Discourse on the Glorification of Christ

John 13:31-38

how this glory might be attained. His suggestion was "a new commandment, . . . That ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." Such love is the proof of that discipleship whereby men may glorify God the Father, and His Son Jesus Christ.¹

The testing of their love was immediately before the Apostles. They were to be tested in the event of Christ's own death. This fact He announced, when He said, "All ye shall be offended in Me this night: for it is written, 'I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.' But after I am raised up, I will go before you into Galilee." These words of their Master made a profound impression upon the minds and hearts of His Apostles.

Their response was a re-affirming of their loyalty. The narrative follows especially the strong assertions of Peter, who was over-confident in thinking that a denial on his part was impossible. Matthew and Mark speak of Peter's declaration of loyalty as growing immediately out of Christ's suggestion of offense on the part of all the Apostles. Probably Peter did so affirm his fidelity at that time. But Luke connects this declaration of Peter directly with Christ's suggestion concerning Satan's special desire to tempt Peter; and John gives it as growing out of Peter's willingness to follow Christ, even unto death. Probably they are all correct. Peter could easily have asserted his superior fidelity three separate times, with increasing strength of statement each time, as Christ led the thought from one point to another.² Such a confident repetition would greatly emphasize the startling statement of Jesus, that, on that very night, by the dawn of morning, Peter should three times deny his Lord, even affirming that he did not know Jesus.

But this immediate test was of small moment in comparison with the great permanent testing of fidelity that lay ahead of the Apostles, and of the whole Church of Christ in the world. That the immediate failure of Peter and the others should be neither

¹Compare *Matthew* 22:34-40, and the discussion of it in Chapter XVIII above. See *Galatians* 5:14; and *1. John* 2:10; 3:14-24; 4:7-13, 19-20.

²This idea of repetition seems the more probable, since Matthew and Mark alone give the assertions of fidelity on the part of all the Disciples, similar to that of Peter, and link those assertions with the suggestion of their being offended in Christ. After this first assertion, it seems that Peter alone was involved in the discussion.

fatal to their faith, nor final, was indicated in three ways. First, Jesus made a post-Resurrection appointment to meet with all the Apostles in Galilee. Again, Christ gave a special charge to Peter, saying, "when once thou hast turned again, stablish thy brethren." Finally, Jesus laid out in detail this permanent testing of the Apostles and others which shall arise out of the inevitable opposition between the ideals of His own Kingdom and the standards of an evil world.

The progress of Christ's Kingdom in the world was to be made under conditions of conflict. Hitherto the Apostles had enjoyed comparative ease, and protection, and sufficiency, in the presence of Jesus. Even the conflicts that had been waged against Jesus had not yet touched the Apostles in a personal way. But henceforth they were to be His representatives in the world, and should receive in themselves that opposition which the evil powers of the world should continue against His Kingdom of life and truth and love. In the steadfast loyalty of His followers amid the conflicts that awaited them in the world would be realized the honor and the glory which they should bring to the Son of God.

For this greater testing of their faith and love, His disciples would need to exercise every possible care, both to provide themselves for the work, and to protect themselves against persecutions. For defense, they would need "the whole armour of God," which Christ here vivified under the figure of a sword for the conflict. In explanation of His meaning, He pointed to the Fifty-Third Chapter of *Isaiah*, as a record of facts that must be accomplished in Himself. When the Lord Himself was thus to be numbered with transgressors, His followers could expect nothing but hatred and persecution.

For the moment, however, the Apostles misunderstood His meaning. With childlike simplicity, they took His words literally, and presented two swords. At once Jesus brought the discussion to a close, saying, "It is enough." He knew that the full meaning of His words would eventually come to His disciples, and that they would, through love and loyalty, help to accomplish His glory in time and in eternity. Such was His theme and His purpose in this first discourse to His Apostles in those last hours with them before His own Death.

(2) Permanent
Testing of Love
to Christ
Luke 22:35-38
Cf. Eph. 6:10-18

a. Nature of This Greater Test

b. Provisions for This Greater Test

Christ's thought, in His first discourse, was chiefly concerned with Himself. As a central theme, He spoke there of the glory

**2. Discourse on
Assurances
John 14:1-31**

that should come to Himself, from His own obedience even unto death, from His Father's approval, and from the love and loyalty of His followers then and afterward. In the second discourse of those last hours with the Apostles, Christ's thought turned directly to His Apostles, and, by extension of application, to His disciples in all the world. The central theme in this second discourse was that of assurance respecting the spirit-world. The subject is presented as of great worth in itself, and also as an argument for that standard of fidelity which Christ had insisted upon in the previous discourse.

First of all, Christ gave the Apostles an assurance of Heaven. This He urged as an antidote to the discouragements that might arise from the troubles of the present life, as pictured in the previous discourse. The struggle was great; but the reward was worth the effort. By way of giving adequate assurance on this point, Christ said:

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's House are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

Following this assurance of an ultimate home in Heaven, Christ gave a double assurance of Himself in relation to the achievement of that home. This assurance He gave

**(2) Assurance of
Christ, as Basis of
Faith and Fidelity
John 14:4-17**

as the basis of their faith and their fidelity to Him for all time to come. "Whither I go," He said, "ye know the way." By this saying He meant that He was the Savior through Whom they should reach the Heavenly reward. But this statement gave rise to two questions, which Jesus answered by giving a double assurance of Himself as *Savior*, and as *Mediator*.

Thomas raised the first question: "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest; how know we the way?" In reply, Christ declared Himself to be the Way to Heaven. He said, "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life; no one cometh unto the Father, but by

Me." In Christ is the plan of life worked out; through Him is the truth of that plan revealed; and from Him as the Divine Source comes salvation to all the world.

a. Christ the Way of Life, and the Revelation of the Father in Heaven
John 14:4-11

Christ is even more. He is the full embodiment of Divine Personality, and is, therefore, a perfect reflection of the Nature of the Father in Heaven. This truth Christ affirmed, when He said, "If ye had known Me,

ye would have known My Father also: from henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him."³

At this point, Philip raised the second question, expressing it in the form of the request: "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." Philip desired to see God with the eyes of the flesh, as the world has always wanted to do. But "God is Spirit," and must

Philip's Request

be seen with the eyes of the spirit. In His Son is seen God's best revelation of Himself. In Jesus Christ, men must see the mind, and heart, and attributes of the Father in Heaven. This underlying truth accounts for the touch of surprise and of rebuke in Christ's reply to the request of Philip.

That reply was made in these words: "Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; how sayest thou, 'Show us the Father?' Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I say unto you I speak not from Myself: but the Father abiding in Me doeth His works. Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me: or else believe Me for the works' sake." Already there had been an abundant answer to Philip's request, both for himself and for all the world. The surprise of Jesus was not that Philip did not *know*, but rather, as the probing questions indicate, that Philip was not satisfied with knowing the Father thus fully revealed in His Son.

As Jesus Christ was the perfect revelation of His Father, so He is the effective Mediator of divine power to men and through them. That is a function of Christ's enthronement in Heaven. This second assurance of His mediation of power He gave to the Apostles, and its benefits He has extended to all believers. Very soon after this discourse, Christ would leave the world in His bodily presence; but

b. Christ the Mediator of Divine Power
John 14:12-17

³"For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." *Colossians* 2:9. Compare also *John* 1:1-3, 14; and *Philippians* 2:5-11. See also Chapters I, and IV.

His going away would only enable Him more effectively to accomplish in His disciples, and through them, even greater things than His own previous works.

Those greater works, still the works of Christ, were to be the last undeniable proof of His Divinity. The difference between

His earlier and His later works was this. Christ had been working in His estate of humiliation: and in that estate, His course

looked like defeat, as in some sense it was. Soon He was to go down to death, in His conflict with the world of evil.⁴ The Shepherd was smitten, and the sheep were scattered. But His assurance at this time pointed to His greater work in His state of exaltation, when He should wield the spiritual power that should conquer the world.

Christ spoke of greater works, not more spectacular and more marvelous; although the Apostles did have their messages confirmed by signs and wonders. Christ pointed to the greater achievements of His Spirit. He foresaw the world-wide working of spiritual leaven, the transforming and liberating power of truth, the rebirth of souls into the Kingdom of God, and the uplifting effects of His Gospel upon human society, as His Kingdom gradually came into the world. These are greater works by so much as the raising of a dead nation, a dead race, a dead world, is greater than the raising of one individual. Christ was at this time completing the work of preparation. In this assurance of greater works, He was looking forward to a glorious execution, to an ingathering of the harvest, to a day of spiritual triumph, through His own mediation of power to those who believe in Him.

The conditions of those greater spiritual achievements were definite. On the part of Christ, the conditions were, that He should be exalted, that He should become

the Mediator of divine power, and that He should send His Spirit to men, even the Spirit of Truth, through Whom the mighty

power of Christ would work in the lives of men. On the part of the Apostles, and of others who might in after ages share in these achievements, the conditions of those greater works were faith, prayer, love, and obedience: for these are the channels through which Divine Power effectively touches the world, and through which men co-operate with the Spirit of Truth from God

⁴This effect was, of course, only apparent, and not real. The element of self-surrender, which made Jesus Christ always the Master even in the hour of death, will be observed in the following chapters.

in the accomplishment of the greater works of Christ's Kingdom on earth.

From the assurance of Christ as Savior and Mediator, the thought of Jesus passed at once to the further assurance of permanent fellowship in the greater work which He had just described. Fellowship with Christ is a thing of the spirit. For the comforts of the assurances here advanced, therefore, Christ invited His followers to look, through the mystic eyes of faith, into the world of the spirit. But He assured them that there, in the unseen world of the spirit, they should see Him, and enjoy a permanent spiritual fellowship with Him.

This was a four-fold assurance. First, it meant the constant companionship of Christ. "I will not leave you desolate," He said: "I come unto you." Again, this assurance meant a vitalizing touch of Christ upon one's life. "Because I live," He said, "ye shall live also." Furthermore, this assurance meant a convincing fellowship as respects the character of Christ. "In that day," He said, "ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you." This fellowship shall unite the believer, through love and obedience, in a triangle bond of love with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ.

Finally, this assurance meant a deeper experimental revelation of Jesus Christ, and of the Father. "He that loveth Me," said Christ, "shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself unto him." This special intimate and personal revelation of Christ to His disciples appealed to Judas (not Iscariot) as a mystery. Consequently, he asked Jesus what had happened, or would happen, whereby His disciples should have a knowledge of Him which the world in general could not have. Jesus explained that this last best part of the assurance was to be realized through the indwelling Christ, Who should come in response to love and obedience. "If a man love Me," said Jesus, "he will keep My word: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." This the world would, of course, never do.

Christ brought this discourse to a conclusion with a final assurance of ultimate triumph. The things of the spirit are the things of God: and they cannot fail. In this

**(4) Assurance of
Divine Triumph**
John 14:25-31

fact, there was then a basis for firmness of faith, and a basis therein for evermore: for Jesus spoke at that time both of the near-at-hand events of His approaching death, and of the deeper mystic

blessings later to be realized through the indwelling of His Spirit.

Thus Christ brought His discourse on Assurances to a close. He knew that the full meaning of these assurances was not clear to the Apostles. But He promised, in closing this address, that the full meaning, in the course of time, would be made clear. He promised to send them the Holy Spirit, saying, "He shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said unto you." Meantime, He promised them an abiding peace, and encouraged them not to fear.

In His last words, Jesus spoke again of His own death. But His purpose even here was to give a final touch of assurance. He knew the effect which His death would naturally have upon the Apostles. Yet He assured them that even in His Death they ought to rejoice, and would rejoice, if their love had only opened their eyes to the fact that the Event was under the sovereign hand of God. For this reason, Christ had foretold the divine program to the Apostles. Instead of their being disheartened, Christ wanted the Apostles to see in the things that were about to happen the unanswerable proof that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, and the Divine Savior of the world.⁵

Having thus resolved His thoughts on assurance into a definite basis for faith, Christ next directed the minds of the Apostles to

**3. Discourse on the
Source of Power**
John 15:1-27,
and 16:1-33

the Source, and the conditions, of power for effective work in His Kingdom. That Source of power for all achievement was Christ Himself. This truth He set forth in the Parable of the Vine and its Branches: wherein the Father is the Husbandman, Christ the Vine, and His disciples the fruit-bearing branches.

Effective power comes from God. It comes through Jesus Christ as Mediator, and immediate Source to the believer. It is operative through the applying agency of His Spirit. It has its human conditions. These two aspects of effective power, the divine source, and the human conditions, are the subjects which

⁵This discourse was delivered at some point on the Mount of Olives, whither Jesus had gone after the Passover Supper, and had sat down with the Apostles. At the close of this discourse, He said, "I will no more speak much with you, for the prince of the world cometh: and he hath nothing in Me; but that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence." The "commandment" here no doubt refers to Christ's death; and the impulse that caused Him to move onward at this time was doubtless the conscious motions of a divine program maturing within Himself, whereby He should be found of Judas, the traitor, in the Garden of Gethsemane. The movement of Jesus and the Apostles, at this time, was therefore probably in the direction of the Garden. The next discourse (*John* 15-16) may have been spoken as the group walked leisurely toward the Garden. There is a fitness in the thought that Jesus did so advance, and pause at the Garden Gate for His great High Priestly Prayer (*John* 17).

Jesus discussed with His Apostles in the Fifteenth and the Sixteenth Chapters of John's Gospel.

Power comes from God and His Son. But on the human side, as a basic condition, there must be a living, abiding union with Christ. "Abide in Me, and I in you." That is the condition of fruitfulness: and that union must be fruitful. Thus only can the Christian life function as it should in the way that will glorify God. Thus only can the disciple prove his discipleship under Jesus Christ: for by their fruits His disciples are known.

But this general condition will bear further analysis. It means to love Christ. "Abide ye in My love," said Jesus. It means that obedience that is inseparable from faithful love. "If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love." It means a love that reaches out to the world of need. "This is My commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you." Thus only may Christians become the medium of God's love to those who are in need of love and life from Him.

This general condition means fidelity in the midst of worldly opposition. "If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you." The duty of the Christian at this point is to remember that the Father, and the Son, and the disciple of Christ are united in this resistance against the evil of the world. It means, finally, a full and faithful co-operation with the Spirit of God, Who bears, with the disciple, an effective testimony to Jesus Christ as the Savior of Men.

Spiritual power comes from God, and through His Son. But the agent of divine power in men is the Holy Spirit, Whom Christ promised immediately to the Apostles, and through Whom Christ has always carried forward the work of His Kingdom in the world. To the gift and work of the Spirit, therefore, Christ devoted His thought in the concluding section of His Farewell Addresses.

Christ promised to send His Spirit to the Apostles. In order that He might do so, it was necessary that Christ Himself reascend to His throne in Heaven. That was the first condition. Gradually Christ made this truth clear to the Apostles, emphasizing, at the same time, the trials and persecutions to which they, for His sake, should be sub-

**(1) Conditions of
Christ's Power:
Love and Fidelity
John 15:1-27**

**(2) Agent of
Christ's Power:
the Holy Spirit
John 16:1-33**

**a. Condition of
Sending the
Holy Spirit
John 16:1-7**

jected. This He could do; for He had already given them enough of truth to stay their hearts.

Christ spoke of His own departure as a necessary condition of His sending the Spirit. His departure was, therefore, highly advantageous to the disciples then and afterward. Thus only, as He said, could He send the Spirit to them. Thus only could He help them all everywhere. Thus only could He enable them to fulfill in themselves the human conditions upon which the Spirit is sent to men. Thus only could His followers live effective Christian lives. These truths are simple in statement, but far-reaching in effect: for Christ was here speaking of that place and power of the Holy Spirit that is now so evident in the *Book of The Acts*, and so much emphasized in the Writings of Paul. Christianity, both in the individual and in the institution, was, in the Early Church, obviously the work of the Holy Spirit. It should be obviously so to-day.

The work of the Holy Spirit, as here outlined by Christ, was to be two-fold: to convert the world, and to promote the work of grace, and the Kingdom of God, in the hearts of men. "If I go away," said Christ, "I will send (the Comforter, or Holy Spirit) unto you. And He, when He is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on Me; of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye behold Me no more; of judgment, because the Prince of this world hath been judged." That is the first work of the Holy Spirit, to convict and convert men, and thus to extend the Kingdom of Christ in the world.

The second great work of the Holy Spirit is to minister to those already within the Kingdom. He builds up the inner life of the saints. He feeds them on the Word of truth in order that they may know and grow. He instructs them in the truth as an equipment for work. He reminds them constantly of "the things of Christ." He suggests and provides what the child of God will need at all times. He is wisdom, and strength, and life to those who faithfully fulfill the conditions of His working in their hearts.

The Apostles needed the Spirit's help even at that time, and most of all to enable them to understand the mystery of the events then taking place. Such knowledge was necessary as a means of increasing the power of their witness for Christ in after days. Hence the gracious promise of Christ, Who here

**b. Work of the
Holy Spirit
John 16:8-15**

cast the universal truth into the terms of this present need of the Apostles:

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He shall guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak from Himself; but what things soever He shall hear, these shall He speak: and He shall declare unto you the things that are to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall take of Mine, and shall declare it unto you."

The source from which the Holy Spirit comes to men is the Throne of God. The Spirit is sent forth from the Father; and the work of the Spirit is under the sovereign administration of the Son of God. In order to this divine arrangement of the Spirit's work, it was necessary that Christ should be exalted again to His Throne in Heaven. This exaltation He should accomplish through His Death, His Resurrection, and His Ascension.

c. Source of the Holy Spirit
John 16:16-24

Therefore, of the source of the Spirit as related to these necessary events, Christ began to speak. He referred to His brief absence from view during His death and burial, to His brief sojourn on earth between His resurrection and ascension, and to His final departure out of sight in the Ascension. But these references, which seem clear to all now, greatly puzzled the Apostles at that time. Perceiving their state of mind, Jesus spoke more definitely of His death, and of the sorrow that should fill the Apostles' hearts, and of the rejoicing that should arise from the evil spirit of the world because of its supposed triumph over the Son of God.

But Christ knew the Divine Hand that controlled these events, and the sovereign triumph beyond the troubles. He saw that from these deep sorrows new life should come into the world. Beyond the darkness, He knew that He would rise again. He foresaw the joy that would then come to His disciples. He assured them that He, having ascended to His Mediatorial Throne, would successfully represent their prayers before His Father in Heaven. "Verily, verily, I say unto you," He assured them, "if ye shall ask anything of My Father, He will give it you in My Name. Hitherto ye have asked nothing in My Name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be fulfilled." In these high thoughts of His mediation, Christ probably was thinking first of all of giving the Holy Spirit in answer to prayer.

Jesus, in the closing words of His Addresses, gave an assurance, and a warning. He summarized, and explained more definitely, the references to His own death and triumph as Mediatorial King. He admitted that He had spoken previously "in proverbs," which the Apostles did not fully understand. However, He assured them that, in the day of His triumph as Mediator, all would be made clear to them. Meanwhile, as every psychologist well understands, the very mystery of these "proverbs" would make for a more effective functioning of the Apostles' memory when the enlightening fullness of the Spirit should be poured out upon them.

**Two Thoughts
in Conclusion**
John 16:25-33

Jesus explained, further, that He had previously spoken of His death and ascension. "I came out from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go unto the Father." With this explanation, following Christ's assurance, the Apostles seemed to be satisfied. They thought that they understood. They felt themselves both assured and secure.

But Jesus knew their dangers, and put them on their guard. They had said, "Now know we that Thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask Thee: by this we believe that Thou camest forth from God." Thus they had expressed their faith in the usual formula descriptive of Christ's divine Nature. With them all would be well, even in the darkest hours, if only they could continue to see Christ as Divine. But at that point lay the danger, which gave rise to Christ's very last words:

"Do ye now believe?" asked Jesus. "Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. These things have I spoken unto you, that in Me ye may have peace. In the world ye have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

With this assurance of Himself, and of His ultimate triumph, the Lord Jesus closed His Farewell Addresses to the Apostles.

2. *Christ's Intercessory Prayer.* The last event of this Thursday evening was the High Priestly Prayer of the Lord Jesus Christ. This prayer was made at the close of the Farewell Addresses, and probably near the hour of mid-night. As already suggested,

Christ's Prayer
John 17:1-26

Christ must have made this prayer at the entrance, or somewhere near the entrance, of the Garden of Gethsemane.

Jesus Christ was a Prophet, a Priest, and a King. In most of the preceding pages, His official work as Prophet, or Teacher, and as King, has been most in evidence. But on this occasion His character as Priest rises into prominence. He was the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. He was nearing the time of His sacrificial death as an atonement for the sins of the world. In this prayer, therefore, the Lord Jesus, as the Divine High Priest of all redemption, performed the two functions of His priestly office.

First, He offered Himself as a sacrifice. In the ancient priesthood, the High Priest offered the sacrifice, and took the blood within the inner veil of the Tabernacle, or Temple, as a basis of atonement before God. That was a type of what Christ, as High Priest, did on this occasion, when He offered Himself as a sacrifice for the atonement of sin. Again, Christ made intercession. The High Priest, having offered the sacrifice, took the blood thereof before God as a ground for making intercession for the one who had brought the offering. So Christ, on this occasion, having offered Himself unto death, came to the Father on the ground of that Offering, and made the intercession for His disciples, then and later, which constitutes the larger part of this great High Priestly Prayer.

This official Prayer was made at the close of Christ's last discourse, as already stated. The Lord Jesus, "lifting up His eyes to Heaven," began to present Himself, in

**1. Christ's
Sacrificial Offering
of Himself in Death
John 17:1-8**

this prayer, sacrificially to the Father. In order to understand this priestly act of Jesus, two facts must have careful attention. Christ was Himself both the Offering and the Priest at this time. Therefore this prayer had to be made before Christ's actual surrender of His life unto death on the Cross. The actual death occurred the next afternoon; but in a very real sense, the end began when Jesus entered the Garden of Gethsemane at the late hour on this Thursday night. Furthermore, it should be observed that Christ said nothing, except by implication, in this entire prayer, about His own death. His thought at this time was far more comprehensive. He presented His entire life of obedience, a completed whole, including both His obedience under the Law and His sacrificial death on the Cross, as His Offering

for Atonement to God, and as the ground of His Intercession in this prayer.⁶

Christ prayed first for an acceptance of Himself as an Offering thus presented. He argued for this acceptance, first, because

(1) **Prayer for
Acceptance of
Himself as an
Offering**
John 17:1-4

of the Divine interests that were involved. Thus only should the purposes of mutual glory between the Father and the Son be accomplished. "Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that the Son may glorify Thee." So the Son of God prayed in the

first petition of this prayer. Through such acceptance also should the purposes of salvation be accomplished in the Son, as planned between the Father and the Son. "As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him." To this petition, Christ added a formal definition of eternal life, saying, "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou has sent."

⁶The correctness of this view of the Prayer will be seen more clearly if one will study the following system of divine Covenants, by which salvation through Jesus Christ is made possible to men. A covenant is a contract, or an agreement, having three parts always, and sometimes a fourth: (1) parties, (2) conditions, (3) rewards, or results, and (4) seals, or tokens. The Plan of Salvation is built upon three covenants, as follows:

I. THE COVENANT OF WORKS (Made at the Creation):

1. PARTIES: God and Man. (*Genesis* 2:15-17; *Romans* 5:12-17).
2. CONDITIONS: Works—perfect obedience. (*Genesis* 2:17; *Ezekiel* 18:4).
3. REWARDS: Life eternal. (This reward Man lost by sin. *Romans* 6:23).

II. THE COVENANT OF REDEMPTION (Made in Heaven):

1. PARTIES: God the Father, and His Eternal Son. (*John* 1:1-14; and Chapter I above; *Isaiah* 6:1-8; *Heb.* 10:5-10; *John* 17:1-8, 24-25; *Phil.* 2:5-11).
2. CONDITIONS: Works—perfection of righteousness: hence Christ's perfect life, subjecting Himself under the Law, and His death in satisfaction of the penalty of the Law as already broken by Man. (*Isa.* 53:4-10; *Phil.* 2:8). Christ took Man's place both in obedience, and in death. (*2. Cor.* 5:19-21; *1. John* 2:1-2; *Rom.* 5:8-9; 8:31-34). Christ thus did what Man did not, and now cannot, do.
3. REWARDS: Eternal Life given to them who believe; and their consequent living to the glory of Christ and of His Father in Heaven. (*Psalms* 2:7-8; *Heb.* 1:1-14; *John* 3:16-18; 17:6, 24; *Heb.* 5:8-10; 9:12; *1. Peter* 1:18-20).
4. SEAL: The Father's Oath to His Son. (*Psalms* 110:4; *Heb.* 7:20-22).

III. THE COVENANT OF GRACE, OR OF LIFE (Held up to the world, in different forms, since ancient times):

1. PARTIES: Christ (or Messiah) and Men (in all ages). (*Gen.* 3:15; *Deut.* 18:15; *Matt.* 11:28-30; *John* 10:9-11).
2. CONDITIONS: Repentance, and Faith in Jesus Christ, Who is the Messiah of the ancient Covenant. (*John* 3:14-18, 36; *Matt.* 1:21; *Luke* 1:68-79).
3. REWARDS: Eternal Life to all who believe in Christ. (*John* 1:12; *Heb.* 3:14; 9:28; *Rom.* 5:1-21).
4. TOKENS: Old Testament Circumcision (*Rom.* 4:11), and Christian Baptism (*Matt.* 28:19-20; *Acts* 2:38; 16:31-33).

This system of Covenants underlies God's dealings with men, and a recognition of this fact throws great light on the understanding of many passages of Scripture. The references given are only representative and suggestive, and might be greatly multiplied.

Christ, arguing further, presented Himself as a sacrifice to be accepted as a matter of justice. This was a matter of justice to the Son of God Himself. Continuing to pray, Christ said, "I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own Self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." Christ had manifested the Name of God, and had brought those who had believed into harmony with God's truth. The Lord Jesus had also vindicated His own Divine origin and mission convincingly before the minds and hearts of men. On the basis of His life-work thus completed, Christ the Savior urged the acceptance of the Offering which He was making of Himself, both as a ground of atonement, and as a ground of the intercession which He was about to make to His Father in Heaven.

Thus far Christ had, in this prayer, considered Himself as an Offering. But as High Priest, His work must continue after His Death on the Cross. He must be exalted to Heaven, in order to carry on His priestly work of intercession and mediation at the Throne of His Father.⁷ For this exaltation, therefore, Christ next prayed in this supplication to His Father.

The manner, and the degree, of that exaltation of Jesus Christ was appointed to be worthy of His character as the Son of God. In this part of the prayer, the Eternal Son of God urged His claim for that honor and glory which was His by virtue of His essential Divinity. He asked that He might be recrowned, by His Father, with the glory of Eternal Sonship at the right hand of God.⁸

Two reasons Christ urged for His exaltation. He had fully manifested the knowledge of the Father unto the men given to Him out of the world. Men had seen Him, heard Him, recognized and accepted Him, and followed Him in the Word of God which He had spoken. Christ had, therefore, fully attested His divine commission, through the fidelity of His life-work in teaching the truth of God. Christ had confirmed His

⁷Compare *Hebrews* 4:14-16; 7:1-10:39; and *1. John* 2:1-2.

⁸Compare *Philippians* 2:5-11. Note also that this petition of Christ refers to His position with His Father in the eternity of the past, which John mentioned in the First Chapter of his account of the Gospel. See Chapter I, above, for John's introduction of the Son of God.

character and commission. He had therefore established that confidence, both with God and men, upon which He could carry out the mediatorial work of His exalted Priesthood prayed for in this part of His prayer. Christ's work was perfect and complete, and justly merited the divine honor for which He prayed.

Being fully assured of acceptance and of exaltation, Christ began at once to make intercession for His disciples, on the grounds of the Sacrifice which He had

**2. Christ's
Intercession for His
Disciples
John 17:9-26**

Offered. He prayed, in this intercession, first for those who then believed on Him, and later for those who would yet believe on Him, through the testimony of His followers, in all ages and all parts of the world.

Christ prayed for the believers of that day. "I pray for them," He said: "I pray not for the world, but for those whom Thou hast given Me; for they are Thine." He

**(1) Prayer for
Present Believers
John 17:9-19**

assigned three reasons for this intercession. Those prayed for belonged to the Father. They had been given to the Son. They belonged, therefore, to both Father and Son. They were also the source of the Son's glory. "Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine," He said; "and I am glorified in them."

Christ prayed that His followers might have the spirit of unity. The special need of this petition, as He suggested, arose from the fact of His own approaching departure.

**a. Bond of Unity
John 17:11-13**

While with them in the world, He had been a visible working center. By His magnetic personality, and His aggressive leadership, He had kept them together. But He was about to leave them. Henceforth He and they must be united in the unseen bond of the spirit. For that He prayed, commending them to the Father. He prayed that His joy might be fulfilled in them; a result which would be impossible, if His Spirit's work in their hearts should be distracted by discord, dissensions, and divisions among them.

Again, Christ prayed that His followers might be preserved from the evils of a hostile world. The words of truth, spoken by Him, and accepted by them, had separated them from the world, whose essential spirit was opposed to His Kingdom, and to His standards of obedience, service, and sacrifice. The world, even then, hated them, because they were not of the world. Yet Christ did not want them taken out of the

**b. Preservation
from Evil
John 17:14-15**

world: He only wanted them kept from the evil that is in the world. He had a work for them to do, as will presently appear in this prayer; and hence He desired them to remain in the world, but to be kept from evil. They were to be the salt of the earth, and the light of the world.

He next prayed for their spiritual growth. They needed this growth especially because they were trying to live a life of separateness from the world, a life of the spirit. Under Christ they were citizens of an invisible and unworldly Kingdom, wherein life, in its origin, purpose, principles, and culmination, was spiritual. Their interests at this point, however, Christ seems to have thought sufficiently cared for in this one petition: "Sanctify them in (or through) the Truth: Thy Word is Truth." That comprehensive petition, fully realized, would in fact cover all of their needs for spiritual growth.

Finally, Christ prayed for the spirit of Christ-like consecration to service in the hearts of His Disciples. "As Thou didst send Me into the world, even so sent I them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth." His own life-work, and even His death, was a consecration of the path that His followers should travel. In Him was also the spirit of fidelity which must be in His disciples. This Christ-likeness in service was thought of as the crowning blessing of discipleship. This is true, because the disciple of Christ is the representative of His truth and grace in the world, and so becomes the reflection of His glory and that of His Father.

Christ prayed also for future believers. Speaking of the Apostles, and other disciples of that day, He said, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word." In such words it is important to observe the Divine Consciousness in Christ which caused

**(2) Prayer for
Future Believers**
John 17:20-24

Him to look beyond death as a mere incident in His mission, with absolute assurance, to the success of His Saviorship in the world. His intercession extended to all individuals in all ages and places, who should come, through the testimony of believing witnesses, into the Kingdom of God. The particular petitions of this intercession were directed toward three main results.

He prayed first for a perfect spiritual unity in His Kingdom in all ages in order that the testimony to His Divine Saviorship

might be more powerful in the world. He asked that the Father and the Son and the believer in Christ might be built together into a harmonious spiritual structure of love and power. This union of inner spirit Christ desired to have perfectly consistent downward from the Father and the Son to the believer, so as to present a convincing testimony before all the world.

**a. Powerful Witness
Through Spiritual
Unity**
John 17:21-23

Christ next prayed for an ultimate union of all believers with Him in Heaven. He petitioned for their safe ingathering to Himself. The feeling which He manifested in this petition shows that it was the great desire of Christ's own heart. "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am." His special reason for this desire, as here urged in the prayer, was "that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundations of the world." This experience of Christ's eternal glory, which was and is an expression of the Father's eternal love for His Son, is to be the Christian's great final reward of faith, and love, and service.⁹

**b. Ultimate Union
in Heaven**
John 17:24

Finally, the Son of God prayed for the salvation of believers as a matter of justice to Himself. Already He had urged this petition in the interest of His followers: now He urged the justice of it as a thing due Himself for His work well done. Consequently, He addressed His petition to the "righteous Father," and enumerated the completeness of the work He had done, and would yet do. Briefly stated, that work was to reveal God, and to convince men of His own Messiahship. He engaged Himself to continue that divinely appointed mission, to the end that men may yet know the power of God's love, and experience the presence of the indwelling Christ.

And this fact of a completed work, and this engagement for a still greater work, Christ offered as the last great arguments for a hearing before the Father in this high priestly prayer, wherein Christ has offered Himself as a Sacrifice to save the world, for which He has also made intercession. And when He had ended this prayer, He entered, with the Apostles, into the Garden of Gethsemane.¹⁰

⁹Compare *Matthew* 25:21, 23.

¹⁰The statement in *John* 18:1 seems to suggest that this prayer may have been spoken at some distance from the Garden; and yet that statement is probably retrogressive in nature, making its summarizing connection with the parallel statements in *Matthew* 26:30, and *Mark* 14:26.

VIII. Mid-Night Thursday Night—Two Events in the Garden of Gethsemane

The last hour of Jesus with the Apostles on this eventful night was spent in the Garden of Gethsemane. That hour was about the turn of mid-night. After His Intercessory Prayer, Jesus had gone, with the Eleven Apostles, into the Garden, possibly to some place to which He had frequently gone with them before for private conference and for prayer. There two events took place, which are to be considered in the remaining part of this chapter. These events were the Agony of Jesus, and the Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus at the hand of His enemies, who were led to the Garden by Judas Iscariot.

I. The Agony of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. The agony of Jesus in the Garden was the logical sequent of His Intercessory Prayer: for that prayer had brought Him vividly face to face with the fact of His Death, and the cause for which He was to die. As on a previous occasion, when the Greeks desired to see Him, He was deeply moved;¹¹ so at this time, as a result of this recent reminder of His Death as a sacrifice for the sin of the world, the Spirit of Jesus was profoundly stirred. Every experience, in fact, of the previous evening and night—the Passover, the new Communion Service, the Farewell Addresses, and the Intercessory Prayer—had deepened, more and more, the tragic consciousness of the Lord Jesus as He passed, at midnight, from that day of calm and intimate fellowship with the Apostles, into the next day of turmoil and death at the hands of His enemies.

A short period of quiet, however, yet remained to the Lord Jesus. He entered the Garden of Sorrow. At some chosen position, He stationed eight of the Apostles, as if on guard. "Sit ye here," He said to them, "while I go yonder and pray." Perhaps it was to them also, by way of urging watchful care, that He said, "Pray that ye enter not into temptation." Then He took the other three Apostles, Peter, James, and John, with Him farther into the Garden. Finally, He stationed them also at another chosen point, as a sort of second guard, and said, "Abide ye here, and watch with Me." Then He went forward a little way alone, "about a stone's cast," as Luke has carefully

Christ's Agony
Matthew 26:36-46
Mark 14:32-42
Luke 22:39-46
Cf. John 18:1-2

**1. Physical
 Circumstances of
 His Agony**

¹¹See Chapter XVIII, page 469.

noted, "and He kneeled down," or, as Matthew says, "fell on His face, and prayed."

The psychological aspects of Christ's Agony, if one may reverently speak of this experience in such terms, were of two separate and distinct kinds. The one aspect was the deep agitation of Christ's own spirit. The other was the thrice-repeated prayer, with its final triumph of complete resignation to the will of God. No other experience like this now under consideration is to be found in all the history of the world.

2. Psychological Aspects of His Agony

The agitation of Christ's spirit was manifested in several ways. It appeared in the deliberate and careful way in which He arranged the Apostles into the double guard.

(1) **Agitation of Christ's Spirit** It was described by Peter, through the *Gospel of Mark*, wherein it is said, that Jesus "began to be greatly amazed, and sore troubled."¹² It was emphasized in the words of Jesus Himself, when He said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death." It was evident in His earnest desire to have the Apostles near Him in this time of spiritual anguish. It was expressed again in His mild complaint against the sleeping Apostles: "What, could ye not watch with Me one hour?" It was greatly emphasized in the energy, of body and of spirit, with which Jesus prayed, when "His sweat became as it were great drops of blood falling down upon the ground."

These stirrings of the tragic depths of His spirit rose both from Christ's human nature and from His divine nature. As Man, He was facing death, even the terrible death of the cross, and He knew well what that meant. The more perfect His human nature, the more humanly sensitive it would be, and consequently the more natural and profound would be His shrinking from this dark and tragic death: yet the Son of Man feared not to die. His perfect human spirit had reason also to recoil from the thought of His dying the death of a common criminal.

But deeper than the effect upon His human nature, was the sensitive response of His divine nature. He was here coming into His closest contact with the world's sin. He felt its weight, and its sinfulness. There was a natural shrinking of Divinity Itself from the fact of sin in that hour when the Son of God had actually to become the Sin-Bearer for a lost and sinful world.¹³ It was no want of courage on His part: for He had already committed Himself to the sacrificial altar. It was the

¹²Possibly Mark was also an eye-witness to this expression on the part of Jesus. Compare *Mark* 14:51-52.

¹³Cf. *Habakkuk* 1:13.

natural shrinking of a perfect human nature from a terrible form of death. It was the natural sense of humiliating anguish of a perfectly righteous person who was called upon to die the death of a criminal. It was the recoil of Divine Nature from contact with sin. It is not possible that any other person could suffer as did the Son of God in this hour of His sorrow in the Garden.

These greatest depths of Christ's spirit found complete expression in His three prayers to the Father. After arranging the

**(2) Three Prayers
of Christ:
First Prayer**

Apostles as stated above, Jesus "went forward a little," according to Mark's account of the event, "and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass away from Him." The prayer that He prayed, as given by Matthew, was in the following words:

O MY FATHER,
IF IT BE POSSIBLE,
LET THIS CUP PASS AWAY FROM ME:
NEVERTHELESS,
NOT AS I WILL, BUT AS THOU WILT.

After this prayer, Jesus returned to the three Apostles nearest to Him, and found them asleep. His mild complaint, previously

Second Prayer

quoted, was the natural response of a perfect nature when it was bearing the burdens which were then weighing upon His own spirit. This complaint, which Matthew gives as general in its address, was addressed, according to Mark, to Peter in person; but the counsel to watch and pray against temptation, repeated at this time, was addressed to them all. Jesus left them again, and went away, perhaps to the same place, and prayed these words:

O MY FATHER,
IF THIS CANNOT PASS AWAY, EXCEPT I DRINK IT,
THY WILL BE DONE.

Jesus, upon returning to the Apostles, found them again asleep. It seems, from Mark's record, that Jesus awoke them a second

Third Prayer

time; for it is said, that "they wist not what to answer Him." They had allowed themselves to be overcome with sleep, and were ashamed of their inability to watch, as Jesus had requested of them. A third time Jesus went away, and prayed the same prayer, "saying again the same words." Possibly it was in connection with this last prayer that Jesus agonized so earnestly, as Luke has suggested, that His

sweat fell, as it were, great drops of blood upon the ground. It was probably at this time also that "there appeared unto Him an Angel from Heaven, strengthening Him."

The will of God had triumphed. Christ returned to the Apostles, with a spirit that was perfectly calm in its resignation.

Closing Events of This Scene The agony was over. His thoughts were again turned from Himself to the Apostles, whom He again found sleeping. Sympathetically He said to them, "Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed unto the hands of sinners. Arise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that betrayeth Me." Thus the first event in the Garden closed with the announcement of the second: for the Traitor was even then at the Garden Gate.

2. *The Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus.* "And straightway, while He yet spake, cometh Judas, one of the Twelve, and with him a multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders." Judas Iscariot, who led this intruding rabble, knew the place, "for Jesus oft-times resorted thither with His disciples." The Traitor, after leaving the Upper Room, as previously noted, had secured this semi-official mob, backed by Jewish authority, and had come to this sacred place to betray the Son of God into the hands of His enemies. The order of events was probably as follows:

Christ Self-Surrendered
Matthew 26:47-57
Mark 14:43-53
Luke 22:47-54
John 18:1-12

The Traitor's kiss, as the appointed means of identifying Jesus, was the first item on this program of treason. Judas had said,

"Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is He; take Him, and lead Him away safely." The statements of Matthew and Mark, in the original, suggest that Judas kissed Jesus much, or many times, or eagerly; whereupon Jesus said, "Friend, do that for which thou art come." Luke, however, represents Jesus as resenting this proffered kiss of Judas, to whom, as "he drew near unto Jesus to kiss Him," Jesus said, certainly, with a reproaching tone, "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?" Between the matter as here presented by Luke, and the previous statements of Matthew and Mark, there is no necessary contradiction; although the exact order of events in the outworking of the harmony cannot now be fully determined. After thus identifying Jesus, Judas rejoined the rabble.

1. Traitor's Kiss
Matthew 26:48-50a
Mark 14:44-45
Luke 22:47-48
John 18:5b

From that moment the whole situation was in the hands of Christ, and subject to His Divine will and power. At once He began to assert His divine authority. From all eternity it was ordained that Jesus Christ *should deliver up Himself* to death. It was necessary for the world to know that *He did do so* at this time. His enemies, also, must be made to know that they could not thus take the Son of God by stealth and craft. For these reasons, Christ immediately asserted His divine power, or divine majesty, or both, and at once took this whole situation into His own sovereign control.

**2. Christ's Assertion
of Divine Power
John 18:4-6**

John, who wrote his account of the Gospel long after the others, recorded this significant assertion of Divine power in these words: "Jesus therefore, knowing all the things that were coming upon Him, went forth, and said unto them, 'Whom seek ye?' They answered Him, 'Jesus of Nazareth.' Jesus saith unto them, 'I am He.'" And Judas also, which betrayed Him, was standing with them. When therefore He said unto them, 'I am He,' they went backward, and fell to the ground." The Son of God took control. He stood His enemies at a distance. He smote them to the ground, Judas among them. He showed them how entirely powerless they were to do anything, except at His will. Then He calmly announced Himself ready for self-delivery into their hands.

From this first situation, until His voluntary surrender of His own life on the Cross, the Lord Jesus was sovereign over the circumstances even of His own arrest, and trial, and death. This fact did not modify the motives and moral evil of Judas and the mob who put the Lord to death. Their responsibility was just the same as it otherwise would have been. For the most part, Jesus allowed them to have their own evil way. But when He chose to assert His Divine power, it was evident that they had fallen into His hands, more than He into theirs. This truth the Lord demonstrated from time to time, as the events of the day progressed from one situation to another.

When Jesus had completed this first demonstration of His sovereign control of the situation, thus confirming again His Divine Nature, He released the spell of His power, and allowed His enemies to approach again, as if to take Him. At this point,

¹⁴What Jesus said was this, "I AM." The *He* has been supplied, incorrectly it would seem, by the translators. The Son of God intended to announce Himself (to identify Himself, in contrast with the idea underlying the traitor's kiss) at this time, by applying to Himself the ancient majestic name of the sovereign self-existent Jehovah, a Name of confidence to Israel, and of terror to Pharaoh (*Exodus 3:14*). At the instant when Jesus let out the fullness of His Divine Majesty in that Name, His enemies were smitten to the ground, awed by His Divine Glory.

the Apostles raised the question about resorting to force in their resistance. "Lord, shall we smite with the sword?" they asked.

3. Christ's Refusal to Use Physical Force

Matthew 26:50b-54

Mark 14:46-47

Luke 22:49-51

John 18:10-11

And Peter, without waiting for the Lord's direction, smote Malchus, the servant of the High Priest, and cut off his ear. But Jesus, still holding the situation under His absolute control, healed the wounded servant, and then turned to deal with the Apostles, and their question of resorting to physical force.

He began by commanding Peter to put up his sword, saying, "for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." By this proverbial statement Jesus meant that the matter then in hand belonged to the world of the spirit, where swords have no effect. Yet He paused to say that, if force were needed, He could, by simply requesting such of His Father, have more than twelve legions of angels at His own command. But the will of His Father, as set forth in ancient prophecy, must be carried out. Therefore He said to Peter, "Put up the sword into the sheath: the cup which the Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" This Christ asked with a note of decision and authority which brought to a close all thought of using physical force on that occasion.

Having settled this question of physical force, Jesus formally addressed the rabble who had come to arrest Him. Matthew states that Jesus spoke to the multitude in general.

4. Christ's Address to His Captors

Matthew 26:55-56

Mark 14:48-49

Luke 22:52-53

Mark makes no definite reference in this connection. Luke says that Jesus addressed His words to "the chief priests, and captains of the Temple, and elders, which were come against Him." Certainly the charges which

He made were directed against the leaders of this cowardly piece of wickedness which they were perpetrating under cover of darkness.

Jesus spoke with an assured sense of His sovereign control of the situation. He boldly charged His enemies with physical and moral cowardice. "Are ye come out as against a robber with swords and staves to seize Me? I sat daily in the Temple teaching, and ye took Me not." In these words Jesus set vividly before His enemies the sneaking malice with which they had cowardly planned His death in secret because they feared His friends among the common people.

The Lord Jesus showed also in these words how deeply He felt the indignity and shame and injustice, which He was here under-

going, and was yet to undergo, at the hands of this mob. He was willing to die for sinners: but He could not have been other than deeply sensitive to the moral suggestion of the situation, when He was arrested as a robber, and was to be tried as a blasphemer of God and a traitor against the government, and then to be crucified between two thieves. Yet He was willing to endure the Cross, despising the shame, because of the joy that was set before Him.¹⁵

Christ endured these afflictions, and these indignities, because, as He here stated, the plan of God for saving the world, foretold in ancient prophecy, must be carried out in this way. Patience and silent acquiescence were the price of Saviorship. It was so agreed in the Covenant of Redemption which He had made with His Father in Heaven. Christ could neither resort to physical force, nor yet could He save Himself by summoning the aid of angel hosts. He must drink the cup which His Father had given. Yet Christ desired that His enemies also should know that they, too, in a deep and awful sense, were in the hands of God, unwittingly carrying out His sovereign purposes.¹⁶

Christ desired also to save the Apostles at this time from the danger of being taken also by this mob. Matthew and Mark were

5. Christ's Excusing content merely to state that the Apostles "all left Him, and fled."¹⁷ But John, writing later, went into the matter in detail, showing how Jesus had centered attention upon Himself, and had also issued an authoritative command to His enemies, in order that the Apostles might escape from the scene in safety.

John's account of the matter is this: "Again therefore He asked them, 'Whom seek ye?' And they said, 'Jesus of Nazareth.' Jesus answered, 'I told you that I am He: if therefore ye seek Me, let these go their way': that the word might be fulfilled which He spake, 'Of those whom Thou hast given Me I lost not one.'" Thus John pointed out again how Jesus held the control of events; and how that, even in this small detail, the enemies of Christ unwittingly carried out the plan of God, and thereby helped to confirm the truth of Christ, Whom they were even then persecuting unto death.

¹⁵See *Hebrews* 12:2-3; and *Isaiah* 50:5-6.

¹⁶See *Acts* 2:23; 3:18; 26:22-23; and *1. Peter* 1:10-11.

¹⁷Apparently the last to leave the Lord at this time was the young man, mentioned by Mark (14:51-52). Since this incident was recorded only in the *Gospel by Mark*, it is generally thought that this young man must have been Mark himself, the author of this Gospel.

Finally Jesus, having controlled the situation to this last moment, surrendered Himself into the hands of His enemies. "So

**6. Christ's Final
Surrender**

Matthew 26:50b

Mark 14:46

Luke 22:53

John 18:12

the band and the chief captain, and the officers of the Jews, seized Jesus and bound Him." This was their hour, as Jesus had said; and He surrendered Himself unto the Powers of Darkness. "And they that had taken Jesus led Him away." That is the statement with which Matthew has closed his

record of this arrest of the Lord Jesus Christ. But Luke and John both suggest that there was violence in the manner in which the mob "seized Him, and led Him away," after that He had delivered Himself into their power.

So ended the last hours which the Lord spent with His Apostles before His death. When the curtain fell upon his scene of evil forebodings, the Apostles were all scattered and gone, and the Lord Jesus had started on the way to His Trial, and after that to His Cross.

CHAPTER XXI

THE ECCLESIASTICAL TRIAL OF JESUS CHRIST

"This is the Heir: come, let us kill Him, that the inheritance may be ours." *Luke 20:14.*

"Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." *Acts 2:23.*

"And now, brethren, I know that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. . . . Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." *Acts 3:17-19.*

There were two Trials of Jesus Christ, both of them held on Friday of the Passion Week. The first Trial was Ecclesiastical.

Trials of Jesus
Matthew 26:57-75

and 27:1-31

Mark 14:53-72

and 15:1-20

Luke 22:54-71

and 23:1-25

John 18:12-40

and 19:1-16

Compare also:

Acts 2:22-24

and 3:12-26

Isaiah 53:1-12

1. Cor. 2:7-8

Hebrews 6:4-6

It began at an early hour on Friday morning, soon after the arrest of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. The charge in this Trial, which was held before the religious authorities of the Jews, was that of blasphemy against God, in that Jesus had claimed Himself to be Divine. The second Trial was civil. It was conducted before the courts of the Roman Government, presided over by Pilate and Herod. The charge against Jesus in the second Trial was that of treason against the Roman Government. Through both Trials, however, the Lord Jesus was prosecuted, or persecuted in fact,

by the same combination of Jewish Rulers, who endeavored to secure, at every turn of events, not justice, but a judgment of death. The two Trials will be carefully analyzed in this chapter and the next that follows.

Naturally the Ecclesiastical Trial came first. The religious authorities of the Jews desired to go as far as they could before

First Trial of the
Lord Jesus Christ

Matthew 26:57-75

and 27:1-10

Mark 14:53-72 and

15:1

Luke 22:54-71

John 18:12-27

referring the case to the Roman Court. In this First Trial, there were three stages, or separate hearings. The first stage was the hearing of the case before Annas, the ex-High Priest. The second stage was the hearing before Caiaphas, the ruling High Priest at that time. The third stage was the hearing before the formal court of the Sanhedrin, which was legally convened, after sunrise, to confirm the

conclusions already arrived at in the previous hearings. Through all of these ecclesiastical hearings of the case, the charge against Jesus was that of blasphemy, in that He made Himself Divine; and always the fixed purpose of His enemies was to secure the verdict, that He was worthy of death.

I. The First Stage: The Trail Before Annas

The first stage of the Trial of Christ on its religious side was that before Annas, the ex-High Priest. John alone has given an account of this hearing. The interest here, as also in the succeeding stages of the Trial, centers in the setting of the court, in the process of the investigation, in the results arrived at, and in the incidental events that happened while the Trial was in progress. These points of interest, as a rule, will be observed in the following study:

**First Stage:
Before Annas
John 18:12-24**

1. *The Court of Annas.* The location of this court is uncertain. It may have been at some distance from the palace of the High Priest, possibly indeed on the opposite side of the City. It was probably pre-arranged that Jesus should be taken there first, after His arrest in the Garden. The hearing was in the nature of a preliminary examination, looking toward the second, and more important stage of the Trial which was to follow.

There is a point of special interest in John's account of this appearance of Jesus before the court of Annas. John's use of the word "first" in his statement shows that he was consciously supplementing the narrative as it had been given by the earlier Gospel writers. The same conscious intention of supplementary narration is seen in John's careful explanation of the status of the High Priest at that time.¹

**1. John's Record
of Christ before
Annas
John 18:12-14**

John's careful record is as follows: "So the band and the chief captain, and the officers of the Jews, seized Jesus and bound Him, and led Him to Annas first; for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, which was high priest that year. Now Caiaphas was he which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people."

¹John was well aware of the regular order in the Jewish succession of the high priesthood. He was also informed as to arbitrary appointments made to that office by the Roman Government. This Annas, who was now an old man, had been appointed to the high priestly office, in the year 7 A.D., by Quirinius, who was then Governor of Syria. In the year 14 A.D., Annas was succeeded in this appointment by his son Ishmael, and later by a second son Eleazar. In 25 A.D., Joseph Caiaphas, son-in-law to Annas, was appointed High Priest, and held the office until 37 A.D. Annas was a capable man, but a man of exclusiveness and fiery temper, and of bitter hatred toward the Pharisees.

Through the introduction of this first stage of the Trial, John has brought several things into view. He has added this story

**2. John's Purposes
in This Record**

of the first stage of the Trial, which is not otherwise recorded. He has shown that Jesus was practically condemned by two high priests, thereby magnifying the enormity of this judgment against the Son of God. Under the life-tenure of the Jewish law, Annas was still the high priest. By political appointment, Caiaphas held that office. The Jews brought Jesus before both of these officers. In narrating this fact, John has shown the malicious care of the Jews in technically bringing the full sanction of their ecclesiastical system to bear upon the coveted judgment against Jesus.

Again, in the very beginning of the Trial, John has effectively shown the low moral tone of this prosecution, and the utter hopelessness of the Lord's receiving either humane treatment or justice at the hands of such courts. This truth John reflected, first, in the brutal treatment accorded to Jesus at this time. The Lord Jesus was brought into the court bound like a common criminal. He was smitten, while in this court, by the brutal hand of an officer of the court. He was re-bound, like a criminal, for dismissal to Caiaphas, after this examination was over. The same truth John suggested in his comment on the judicial character of Caiaphas, who had already announced his plan to adjudge Jesus to death, and who was, therefore, completely disqualified to sit in judgment in any part of this Trial. There was no hope of justice from such a judge in any court. But these are the circumstances, as John has effectively suggested in a few words, under which the Lord Jesus Christ was brought to face the courts in His Trial.

The Jews, however, had a definite purpose in this early session before Annas. The enemies of Christ desired to trick the Law itself, in order to secure His death by the next day. Their law required that the pronouncing of a capital sentence should be deferred until the next day after the trial.

**3. Jewish Motives
for This Hearing
before Annas**

Hence the enemies of Christ needed this preliminary hearing, to give a (sham) technical validity to that sentence of death which they hoped to have pronounced upon Jesus when the next court-day should open, at sunrise the next morning.

These enemies of the Lord hoped, therefore, to find, in this preliminary examination, some definite matter which they might use to accelerate the conclusion of that more formal hearing before Caiaphas for which they were rapidly making preparations.

Furthermore, since the aged Annas was supposed to be a strong personal power back of the opposition to Jesus, it was both politic and natural that the trial should begin with Annas, as the man best qualified to carry the case to a rapid conclusion. The enemies of Jesus were determined to leave no steps untaken which would help to secure a judgment against Jesus before sunrise, when the Sanhedrin should begin its legal session for the next day. The whole situation was a sham: but it was such a sham as pleased the conscience of the scribes and Pharisees.

2. *The Process of the Examination before Annas.* The record of this stage of the Trial is brief. Probably the examination

John's Record

John 18:19-21

was also brief. Annas (for so John seems to mean here by "the High Priest") is reported to have asked Jesus concerning

His Disciples and His teaching. That was the central inquiry of this preliminary examination.

Exactly what the old priest asked, or how far he pushed his inquiries, are questions which cannot now be determined. He

1. Question of Annas to Jesus

probably asked about the number, and the character of Christ's Disciples, and possibly about their organization into the Kingdom

which Christ had inaugurated. Annas inquired also about the teaching of Jesus. The jealous and cautious old priest had, as he would naturally feel, both religious and political reasons to ask carefully into both the subject-matter and the methods of that instruction which the Master Teacher had made so attractive to the common people. But Annas could not conceal from the divine eye of Christ the hypocrisy which lay beneath the surface of these inquiries. The Lord Jesus saw that sinister motive very distinctly, and accordingly made His answer.

The reply of Jesus was marked by candour, frankness, and courage. He said to Annas, "I have spoken openly to the world;

2. Answer of Jesus to Annas

I ever taught in the synagogues, and in the Temple, where all the Jews come together; and in secret spake I nothing. Why askest

thou Me? Ask them that have heard Me, what I spake unto them: behold, these know the things which I said."

These are interesting words. In them there was an obviously intended contrast between the open frankness of Jesus and the stealthy insincerity of Annas. There was also a suggestion of grave responsibility resting upon Annas to know for himself that truth which Jesus had spoken openly before all the people. There was also a note of finality in these words which gave

Annas to understand that he would secure nothing now which he might use against Jesus in the later stages of the Trial. Jesus also shielded His disciples, by pointing, in this reply, to the general publicity of His work, and by making His appeal to all who had come into contact with His works and His teaching.

3. *The Results of the Examination before Annas.* The first result of this examination was the failure of Annas, with all of his craftiness, to entrap the Son of God. This result must have somewhat disconcerted the plans of Annas, and greatly exasperated him for the moment. Perhaps some

**John's Statement
of Results**

John 18:22-24

physical expression of his ill-nature at this point led to the high-handed action of the officer who, considering Christ's reply to be insolent, struck Him a blow with the hand, or with a rod, as the text may also be read. This ruffian, at the same time, said to Jesus, "Answerest Thou the High Priest so?"

Such treatment in court was illegal. In response to the blow, therefore, Jesus demanded the moral ground for this cruelty. "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou Me?" But Annas, perceiving the uncertain issue toward which these events were tending, cut short this preliminary hearing. He commanded that Jesus be bound again, and then sent Him away to Caiaphas, the official High Priest. So ended, without any gain whatever to His enemies, the first stage in the Ecclesiastical Trial of the Lord Jesus Christ.

4. *Incidents of the Examination before Annas: Peter's First Denial of Christ.* Meantime an important incident had taken place just outside the door of Annas's Hall. The

Peter's First Denial

John 18:15-18

crowd had gathered there, in the cool of the early morning, by the fire which the officers and the servants had made. Peter was standing with them, and there he first denied His Lord and Master.

The facts of this denial, as recorded by John, are as follows. Peter and John had followed Jesus, as He was brought under arrest to this court of Annas. John, who knew the High Priest, went into the Hall to hear the examination. But Peter, who had incriminated himself by smiting Malchus in the Garden, remained outside, and seemed to hide himself away in the crowd. Perhaps after the confusion outside had quieted, Peter drew nearer the fire. He was standing by the fire, warming himself, when he was seen by John from within. John, knowing Peter's melancholy condition, secured permission from the damsel who kept the door

to bring him inside the Hall. As the two Apostles were entering, this woman at the door asked Peter the direct question, "Art thou also one of this Man's disciples?" In reply, Peter said, "I am not." That statement was Peter's first denial of his Lord and Master.

II. The Second Stage: The Trial before Caiaphas

The second stage in the Trial of Christ was that before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin. Probably they had been gathering during the first stage of the Trial before Annas. To them, therefore, perhaps as hurriedly as possible, after the fruitless examination before the ex-High Priest, Jesus was sent bound as a criminal. This part of the Trial had been told in full by the first three of the Gospel Writers. For this reason, John has recorded nothing concerning this second stage of the Ecclesiastical Trial, except a brief statement about Peter's denial of the Lord. Since the facts were given already with sufficient fullness, John neither supplemented, nor augmented, nor repeated the narrative at this point.

1. The Setting of the Court: the Sanhedrin Informally Assembled before Sunrise. The Sanhedrin had been hurriedly called together, while Jesus was before the aged Annas. This more formidable Court assembled in the Palace of Caiaphas, the official High Priest, who presided over this second stage of the Ecclesiastical Trial of the Lord

Setting of the Court
 Matthew 25:57
 Mark 14:53
 Luke 22:54

Jesus Christ. The session began in the after part of the night, and had completed its work at an early hour in the morning, perhaps before dawn, and certainly before sunrise, which was the legal hour for the Sanhedrin to begin its earliest meeting. This entire session was therefore illegal. Yet that fact of illegality did not stand much in the way of Christ's determined enemies. This illegal session was, in fact, the principal stage in the Ecclesiastical Trial of Jesus: for it was here that His enemies conducted their principal investigation; and it was here that they actually arrived at their final conclusion, judging Him to be worthy of death.

The exact local relation between the Hall of Annas and this meeting place of the Sanhedrin in the Palace of Caiaphas cannot now be definitely determined. Among Bible scholars there are

wide differences of opinion. Some even suppose that the two places were far apart, possibly on opposite sides of the City. It is

more likely, however, that the two places were near one another. The best supposition seems to be this: that the Hall of Annas and Caiaphas the meeting place of the Sanhedrin were situated on opposite sides of the same open court, within the general Palace of the High Priest. This supposition enables one, at least more harmoniously, to account for many facts and suggestions that are brought into the narrative of this part of the Trial of Jesus.² Indeed, it is difficult to account for some points of the narrative on any other supposition.

For one thing, this supposition accounts for the narrative statements concerning Peter and John at this point in the story.

2. Peter and John
at the Two Courts
Matthew 26:58
Mark 14:54
Luke 22:54-56

Matthew, Mark, and Luke agree in beginning their several accounts of the Trial of Jesus with the story of this Second Stage, which was, in fact, the central part of the Ecclesiastical Trial. They all state that Jesus was thus brought before Caiaphas, the High Priest.

They all agree that the officers and others outside of the door had built a fire, because it was cold, as was often the case in the after part of an April night in that locality.

They all agree also that Peter, "afar off," had followed the officers who brought Jesus to the court; that Peter sat outside of the Hall with the common crowd; and that all of these incidents occurred at the fire in the open court before the meeting place, where Caiaphas had called together the Sanhedrin for this second stage of the Ecclesiastical Trial. No one of the first three Gospel Writers, however, mentions the presence of John at this time, and the part that he had in this story of Peter and of his early denial of the Lord Jesus.

²This supposition that the Hall of Annas was near to the meeting place of the Sanhedrin, in the Palace of Caiaphas, would account, at least more harmoniously, for the following facts, besides those considered in the text above:

(1) The possible presence of Caiaphas at the preliminary hearing before Annas, and again, almost immediately thereafter, in the president's chair in the Sanhedrin, to receive Jesus when He was delivered to that court.

(2) The exact account, given by John, of Peter's first denial, and the more general statement of the three denials, as given by the other Gospel Writers.

(3) The intention of an added indignity, on the part of Annas toward Jesus, when he re-bound the Lord, like a criminal, only to send Him across the court within the same building.

(4) The sufficiency of one fire, which was built in the open court within the building; and practically all of the personal relations of Peter to those around that fire.

(5) The opportunity which Jesus had of giving to Peter that effective look, of mingled reproach and pity, as the Lord crossed the open court from one stage of the Trial to another.

But John was present, inside the court, and knew the facts, which he has given with the fullness of detail already presented in considering his account of the trial before Annas. In narrating the situation, here set down in more general terms by the Synoptic Writers, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, John has localized the events and circumstances outside of the door of Annas. There is no discord in the several narratives, and very little difficulty, if the supposition is accepted, that there was but one gathering place for the common crowd, and that that place was in the open court, where the fire was made, between the Hall of Annas and the opposite chamber of the Palace, where Caiaphas convened this early meeting of the Sanhedrin.

In that case, it is easy to see that John and the other Gospel Writers have written of the same situation, but from different points of view. In his supplementary account of the First Stage of the Trial, John has told, in greater detail, and with more definite historical perspective, the things that actually took place; while the other Writers have been content merely to summarize the situation. Matthew, Mark, and Luke, in one general statement each, have given the setting of the Second Stage of the Trial; for at that point, omitting the First Stage entirely, they all begin to narrate the facts of the Trial itself.

2. *The Process of the Trial before Caiaphas at Night.* The process of the Ecclesiastical Trial, in this second stage, is told in detail by only two of the Gospel Writers, Matthew, and Mark. According to their records, three events constitute the total movement of the Trial at this time, as it advanced, from point to point, to the definite and final conclusion. In the first of these events, the

Records of Trial
before Caiaphas
Matthew 26:59-68
Mark 14:55-65
Luke 22:63-65

Jews failed to agree upon a charge against Jesus. In the second, the Lord Jesus made a great confession. In the third, the Court took final action on that confession.

The Rulers of the Jews, and their officers, who brought Jesus to His Trial, agreed on one thing: they all desired to put Him to death. But beyond this malicious desire, except in one other point to be considered later, there was nothing at this time upon which the Jews who persecuted Jesus could agree. Certainly they could not, as the event proved, agree upon a charge which they could, with concerted action, prefer against the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. Failure of Jews
to Agree on a
Charge Against
Jesus Christ

There were two causes for this want of agreement on the part of Christ's enemies. The one cause was the incoherent state of their own minds. The other was the general dissensions among themselves. They seem to have had no definitely organized plan of procedure at this time. Deep in their hearts, there was one unanimous thought; but their actions, as yet, moved from the surface, where there were differences, which were at this moment more active than was that deeper point of agreement.

**(1) General
Dissention Among
the Jews**

For the moment the superficial animosities of the Jewish factions among themselves made it difficult for them to formulate a specific charge against the Son of God. The Pharisees were strict constructionists respecting the Law, while the Sadducees, in their wealth and luxury, were naturally liberal. With the Pharisees, the Sabbath Law had been a hopeful point of attack against Jesus in their former conflicts with Him. But the Sadducees could not co-operate in a charge under that Law; for they were themselves notoriously liberal in their disregard for the Law of the Sabbath. The high priests might have charged Jesus with a high-handed usurpation of authority when He cleansed the Temple, as He had done. But the stricter sect of the Pharisees at once would have justified that deed as a thing which, in itself, needed to be done. In like manner, petty animosities would have arisen from other angles.

Seemingly, it was to avoid these sources of superficial animosity, that the wise old Annas limited his examination, in the previous stage of the Trial, to questions concerning Christ's disciples, and the doctrines which He was supposed to be giving them. Annas, seeing the deeper point of agreement upon which their cause must depend, was far too wise to stir up any superficial strife. It was also his familiar experience with these sources of superficial animosity among the Jews, that caused Caiaphas, a little later in the process of the Trial, to take the situation into vigorous hand. He saw that the necessary concerted action could arise only from the deeper unanimous desire of all factions being brought into action; and toward that end, as will presently appear, Caiaphas directed the full strength of his personal and official power.

**(2) Confusion of
False Witnesses
Matthew 26:59-60a
Mark 14:55-56**

However, in order to understand fully the forceful purpose of Caiaphas, it is necessary to trace the course of the Trial up to that point where he began to play his drastic part. The first step in that direction was the complete confusion of the testimony rendered by the witnesses

whom the Rulers of the Jews had suborned for the purpose of testifying against Jesus. "Many false witnesses came," as the record states. But there was such a confusion in their testimony that nothing tangible and workable could be had out of all the mass of their perjury and falsehood.

Equally worthless was the testimony of the two witnesses who finally agreed respecting a matter touching the Temple. Matthew reports them as testifying that Jesus had said, "I am able to destroy the Temple of God, and to build it in three days." Mark insists that they were false witnesses, and that they even claimed to have heard Jesus say, "I will destroy this Temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another made without hands."³

Two observations are worthy of attention at this point. First, the testimony given by these two witnesses misrepresented both the words and the reference of Jesus in the original statement made by Him. Furthermore, this point, if established, was of no worth in advancing the case here before the court. It was evident to the leaders at least, that the real unseen force which had brought Jesus into that court was not yet working. The matters advanced by these false witnesses moved only on the surface. The determining depths of animosity to Jesus were still dormant.

The real forces of the situation were not functioning. No one knew this fact better than Caiaphas, who was presiding over the Sanhedrin. In his naturally rude and imperious manner, he began to show himself exasperated, if not disgusted, with the want of definiteness and progress in the Trial thus far. He resolved, therefore, to force the real issue at once to the front. With almost brutal ferocity, he poured out his anger upon Jesus, hoping thereby to start something that would be effective in getting the Trial into motion.

Hence Caiaphas, standing up, as if in giant rage, railed out on Jesus, saying, "Answerest Thou nothing? What is it which these witness against Thee?" But this blustering action of the exasperated High Priest accomplished nothing at all: for "Jesus

³See *John* 2:19, and compare *Matthew* 27:40. This striking statement of Jesus, in the beginning of His public ministry, had lingered in the minds of His enemies, and doubtless had often been ridiculed by them as a preposterous idea. In the absence of other agreement, it would be easy to bring forward this point as one thing at least that was tangible.

held His peace," and the real forces of the Trial were not set in motion, as Caiaphas had hoped would be done by his own outburst against the Lord Jesus Christ.⁴

To Caiaphas it became at once evident that he would have to approach his purposes from another point of view. This he did

**2. Christ's
Confession of His
Divinity
Matthew 26:63b-64
Mark 14:61b-62**

when he placed Jesus under oath as to His Divine Nature, saying, "I adjure Thee by the living God, that Thou tell us whether Thou be the Christ, the Son of God." This challenging oath was effective, for reasons that will presently appear. It led to Christ's

confession of His own Divine Nature. It served to accomplish the new purpose of Caiaphas. It also marked for the Trial an advanced movement, in which, in the deeper sense, the Son of God asserted again His sovereign control over the situation, which was, as if by the irony of fate, thus turned over into His hands.

The purpose of Caiaphas, in this appeal to Jesus, was very definite. The High Priest knew that his colleague in this crime

**(1) Purpose of
Caiaphas in This
Appeal to Jesus**

had brought Jesus to that court in order to secure some form of legal sanction for putting Him to death. Caiaphas knew also that they desired to murder Jesus because He

claimed to be a Divine Person, the Son of God. Caiaphas knew further that this charge was the only one upon which the several factions of the Jews then before him would ever agree, so that the Trial could be carried through to the conclusion which he and they desired. He saw that the moment had come when all factions must be aroused to the one unifying purpose of making away with Jesus, Whom they all desired to destroy because He claimed to be the Son of God.

From his own point of view, the wily High Priest did a saga-

⁴The silences of Jesus are truly remarkable. They astonished even the Rulers of the Jews, before whose most threatening appeals to force He calmly held His peace. This wonder would seem inevitable, when the underlying truth is rightly observed.

That truth is this. The Son of God surrendered Himself to His enemies; but never did He surrender for one moment His divine sovereignty over the situations through which He was passing. He chose His own time for silence, and His own time for speaking. When His enemies arrogantly presumed to be in control of events, as Caiaphas did on this occasion in his blustering address to Jesus, then the Lord Jesus calmly asserted His sovereignty in silence. When He took charge of the situation, as He did at His arrest, or when His enemies virtually turned over the situation to Him, as did Caiaphas in his next movement in the Trial, then Jesus spoke with freedom and with authority.

Always, let it be remembered, the Son of God was in command. Every step toward the Cross was one of sovereign Self-surrender. This fact greatly magnifies His humiliation, and the cup of sorrow which He willingly drank, to save a lost world. Christ was never in the hands of His enemies, except by the consent of His own sovereign Will.

cious thing, when he placed Jesus under oath concerning His Divine Nature: for that question would stir the deepest animosity in the hearts of the Jews, and bring them all together against Jesus. Purposely, Caiaphas was direct and specific in this oath. He had hoped in his previous attack upon the Lord's silence to stir up his own comrades in crime. This purpose was thwarted by the continued silence of Jesus.

Up to this time, as should be noted, this stage of the Trial had stood absolutely still, while the witnesses only wrangled among themselves. But Caiaphas saw that the charge of blasphemy against Jesus, if once again well revived in the thought of His enemies, would enlist the deepest hatred of all factions in the common cause, and precipitate a forward movement of the Trial toward the coveted sentence of death. Hence Caiaphas made his question to Jesus definite enough to produce this revival effect, whether Jesus made reply, or maintained silence, as He had done before. There was also a hope that Jesus would either confirm, or else deny, His claim to be the Son of God.

When Caiaphas said, "Tell us whether Thou be the Christ, the Son of God," the Lord Jesus, with calm and sovereign majesty, replied, "Thou hast said." That manner of reply was the common way of stating a strong affirmative. Mark quoted Jesus as saying, "I am." The meaning is the same, being strongly affirmative in each wording of the reply. "Nevertheless I say unto you," Jesus continued, "henceforth ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of Heaven."

**(2) Formal
Statement of
Christ's Divinity**

In these words Jesus formally affirmed His Divine Nature. But He did more than that. He impressed upon His enemies the next logical truth which should claim their attention. He told them that they were dealing with a God. Then He solemnly suggested that the time would come, when they should be required to answer to Him for their present deeds: for His death meant an enthronement of power and glory, and of victory and judgment. Christ here outlined for Himself a character, and triumph, and destiny, which, had not His enemies been stone blind to the truth, would have struck terror to their souls.⁵

Through this challenge of Caiaphas, and Christ's reply thereto, the control of the situation passed actively into the hands of

⁵The enemies of Jesus never saw Him again after His Death; but from that day He has been a power with which the Jews have had to deal.

the Lord Jesus. Hitherto, in the Trial, He had maintained a sovereign silence. From this time, for a while at least, He

**b. Sovereign
Control in the
Hands of Jesus
Christ**

became the active Leader in the situation. There was, in fact, a sort of divine irony in the sovereign manner in which the Son of God calmly outlined, apparently for His helpless enemies, the charge under which

He was to be condemned.

And this irony of the situation He carried even further. He not only formulated the charge against Himself which His enemies had hitherto been unable to formulate for themselves, but He also gave a full, frank, and definite confession of all that was brought against Him in that charge. His enemies had been unable to make out their charge. By making out the charge Himself, as He had done, and then adding His full confession thereto, He placed His enemies in the ironic light of being unable, in fact, to conduct this Trial which they had undertaken. Some such result was inevitable, when a set of evil men had undertaken to place a God on trial, as these enemies of the Son of God had done. "The heathen rage," but "He that sitteth in the Heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision." Certainly there is something, in the irony of this situation, that looks like divine mockery of these enemies of the Son of God.

Possibly this is the best place to make clear one important truth. Jesus Christ was not *tried* in court at all. Emphatically

**c. Jesus Christ
Never Tried in
Court at All**

was that true of His so-called Ecclesiastical Trial before the religious courts of the Jews. It is common to say that Jesus was tried before the Jewish courts for blasphemy, and

later, before the Roman courts of Pilate and Herod, for treason. These common expressions are so convenient and clear in their meaning that their use is entirely justified.

But the exact truth, which should be clearly seen, is that Jesus was never *actually tried* on these charges, or on any others. He was brought into the courts, and, at different times, was asked certain questions relating to these charges. In reply, He always stated some fundamental truth about His own nature, and commission, and destiny. And on these facts, stated by Himself, if on any facts at all, His enemies, who were determined not to see the truth, based their judgments and their actions.

Jesus Christ was brought into court, but never tried. In the so-called Ecclesiastical Trial, the witnesses suborned to testify against Him spent their energies, not trying to establish a charge,

but in fruitless wrangle over the formulation of a charge. Later in the Roman Trial, as will appear, the enemies of Jesus had the audacity to ask Pilate at first for a death sentence upon Jesus without even pretending to present a charge of any kind. In these circumstances there is an interesting confirmation of the truth. The irony of Fate was working effectively to set Jesus Christ in the correct light before all ages. His enemies were determined to put Him to death: but to condemn Him they dared not really try Him in their courts. Supported by this paradox alone, the Personality and Power of Jesus would stand for all time. Literally, as the Prophet had suggested; "He was taken from prison and *from judgment.*"

After this confession of Jesus, acknowledging the truth of His own Divine Nature and Sonship to God, this stage of the Trial came rapidly to a conclusion. The

3. Re-action of the Court to Christ's Confession
Matthew 26:65-68
Mark 14:63-65
Luke 22:63-65

re-actions of the court to this confession were of two different kinds. The one of these had the form of legal procedure. The other was the action of the fanatical mob.

The verdict of the Court was that, of course, for which the Court had been called into session. When Jesus had confessed, and even openly emphasized His claim to be the Son of God, the High Priest rent his garments, as if his very soul were outraged by this claim on the part of the Son of God. This hypocritical response was made, doubtless, primarily for the purpose of preparing the common people for their vote on the question, which was soon to be submitted to them.

When he had thus performed his personal part, Caiaphas took up the case for judgment in the Court. His first act, here, was to recognize the confession of Jesus as sufficient for the purposes of the Court, without additional testimony. Caiaphas declared the confession to be blasphemy, which had been pronounced in the hearing of all the Court. Having thus presented the case, the High Priest called for the decision of the Court. They answered and said, "He is worthy of death." Mark has recorded that the verdict was unanimous: "And they all condemned Him to be worthy of death." The Court adjourned.

And the mob spirit broke loose. Characteristic in several respects, was the mob spirit manifested in the maltreatment of Jesus after He was condemned by the Court. There was an

effort to scorn and humiliate Him. "Some began to spit on Him," Matthew says, "to spit in His face." There was also an exhibition of physical cruelty toward Jesus.

(2) **Maltreatment of Jesus**
 Matthew 26:67-68 . . . buffeted him"; and Luke says that the men who held Jesus "beat Him." His enemies also mocked Him. They tried to ridicule the idea of His divinity. Having blind-folded

Him, they struck Him and said, "Prophecy unto us, Thou Christ: who is he that struck Thee?"

Thus, with mob violence in its milder moods, the enemies of Christ brought this second stage of His Ecclesiastical Trial to a close, perhaps before dawn on Friday morning of the Passion Week.

3. *The Results of the Trial before Caiaphas at Night.* The results of this second stage of the Ecclesiastical Trial were important. Even the enemies of Christ must have been surprised at the divine effectiveness with which His one great reply had

Verdict: "Worthy of Death"

passed by all non-essentials, and brought the matter to a speedy close. His enemies also showed their incapacity for gratitude, and also for human kindness, in their maltreatment of the Son of God. The decision of this stage of the Trial was final in fact, but not legally so. The verdict, that Jesus was "worthy of death," had to be confirmed by a regularly constituted session of the Sanhedrin, which could meet in legal session only after sunrise. That third and last stage of the Ecclesiastical Trial will be studied presently, after the consideration of some other events that happened during this hearing of the case before the informal Court of Caiaphas.

4. *Incidents during the Trial before Caiaphas at Night.* During this second stage of the Ecclesiastical Trial, one important event was happening outside of the Palace door. That event was the continuation of the melancholy Denials of Peter, which, as previously noted in this chapter, he had already begun during the first stage of the Trial before Annas. In this defection of Peter, as it was continued on this occasion, there were three facts of central significance.

Full Records of Peter's Denials
 Matthew 26:69-75
 Mark 14:66-72
 Luke 22:55-62
 John 18:15-18,
 and 18:25-27

The first was Peter's continued apostasy. Early on the previous evening, as reported by Mark, Jesus had said to Peter, "Verily I say unto thee, that thou to-day, even this night, before the cock

crow twice, shalt deny Me thrice.”⁶ The records show that this prediction was exactly fulfilled, as the Lord had said, and with very serious effects in the mind and heart of Peter.

The second fact was the impressive look which Jesus gave to Peter on this unfortunate occasion. Seemingly while Peter was yet denying, “the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter.” That look may have been filled with reproof, or with compassion. Probably it contained both. Almost certainly it carried a kindly suggestion that Peter extricate himself from this embarrassment by leaving the place. Whatever the nature of this look, its message was effective with Peter.

Therefore the third fact of this incident was the moral recoil of this evil, and the tearful exit of Peter. He had doubtless as a result of natural weakness, moral cowardice, and fear of the law, denied his Lord and Master, exactly as the Lord had said on the previous evening. Therefore, reminded by the cock’s crowing, and pierced to the heart by this look from Jesus, Peter, conscience smitten, and no doubt disgusted with his own moral cowardice, “went out, and wept bitterly.” So ended Peter’s Denials: so also began his saving remorse.

III. The Third Stage: The Trial before the Sanhedrin

The last stage of the Ecclesiastical Trial of Jesus was before a formal session of the Sanhedrin. Already the Court of Caiaphas, which was the Sanhedrin in informal session, had decided that Jesus was worthy of death. This third stage of the Trial was, therefore, merely a formal matter, which was made necessary by the technicalities of the situation: for the Sanhedrin could not meet in legal session until after sunrise. The enemies of Christ desired only to secure a legal confirmation of the verdict upon which they had already agreed in the night session of the court.

**Third Stage: Before
the Sanhedrin**
Matthew 27:1-10
Mark 15:1
Luke 22:66-71

1. The Sanhedrin Assembled in Legal Session. The Sanhedrin, as a legal court, could meet only in the daytime: that is, between sunrise and sunset. This Court was composed of three classes: the elders of the people, the chief priests, and the scribes. Hastily, while the morning was dawning, the members of this

⁶Compare *Matthew* 26:34; *Mark* 14:30; *Luke* 22:34; and *John* 13:38. Jesus meant that Peter would that night, before daylight, deny Him three times. The numbers, which worked out exactly, were used to make the prophecy more impressive; and they did so, as is seen in their later effect upon the memory of Peter.

Court had arranged the preliminaries of this meeting, and had planned their course of rapid procedure. Therefore, as Luke stated the facts, "as soon as it was day, the assembly of the elders of the people were gathered together, both chief priests and scribes; and they led Him away into their council." They were thus ready, at the earliest possible moment, to proceed with their final judgment of the Lord Jesus. Matthew stated that they "took counsel against Jesus to Put Him to death." The Court assembled with a predetermined judgment which the Court itself desired to have pronounced upon Him Whom they would place on trial.

2. *The Process of the Trial before the Sanhedrin.* The process of this part of the Trial was only a matter of brief form: just enough to recall, and to confirm, a judgment already arrived at in the previous night session. The entire procedure amounted to only two questions to Jesus, and His answers thereto, and the consequent judgment of the Court.

Records of Trial
Matthew 27:1-2
Mark 15:1
Luke 22:66-70

The members of the Court opened this session with these words, which were addressed to Jesus in a calm and considerate manner:

1. **Their First Question, and Its Answer**
Luke 22:67-69

"If Thou art the Christ, tell us." The name *Christ* signifies the Lord's royal character. His enemies doubtless used this designation with definite intention. Naturally they would hope that they might secure from Jesus some statement about His Kingship, or His Kingdom, which they could construe into a political charge to bring against Him before the Roman Government. But in this design, if such was their intention, they were completely defeated.

Christ, in His reply, dealt first with His enemies, and then with the nature of His own Divine Kingship. He told them that it

(1) **Christ's Claim to Divine Glory**

was useless for Him to answer their question. If He should tell them the truth, they would not believe. They had already refused to recognize His divine Nature, His divine Word, and His divine Works. This rejection was due to their wilful ignorance and sin: for when He had tried to instruct them by questions that would draw out their thought and clarify their understanding, they had refused to answer Him.⁷ He saw plainly the depths of their designs in this manner of introducing this new stage of the Trial.

⁷Compare Matthew 22:41-46, and the discussion above of this passage.

In this reply, it is clear that Jesus was sitting in judgment on His judges. This advantage He prosecuted still further in His next statement. He understood their designs.

(2) Christ Sovereign Over This Trial Scene He knew that their verdict was already formed. He knew that there was nothing to be gained by prolonging the Trial into wearisome discussion.

Determining therefore to bring it to a speedy close, Christ took the situation into His own hands. His method, however, was very different from what His enemies had expected. With sovereign authority, He affirmed that "henceforth the Son of Man shall be seated at the right hand of the Power of God."^a

His words here, as always, were divinely well chosen. In this statement, He announced again the exact nature of His Kingdom, as being of the spirit-world. Thus He offset

(3) Christ's Words Divinely Effective the designing inquiry of His enemies. Thus He also exalted Himself to the sovereign

Throne of God, thereby issuing to His enemies a solemn warning. He further claimed for Himself full divine glory, and thus turned the hypocritical calmness of His enemies into complete exasperation.

As a result of this first Reply of Jesus, His enemies asked Him a second question. Probably with an outburst of indignation, and scorn, and contempt, they all exclaimed, "Art

2. Their Second Question, and Its Answer
Luke 22:70

Thou then the Son of God?" *He* was a prisoner in their courts, and already condemned to death. To their sin-blind minds, for *Him* to make that claim was an unspeakable blasphemy.

But Christ calmly accepted their scorn as a statement of fact. Ignoring their spirit of animosity, He replied with an affirmative,

Christ's Affirmation of His Own Divinity

"Ye say that I am." Such a repetition of a question as its own answer was the oriental way in which the one responding confirmed in full the positive suggestion of the question asked. Christ's answer here was equivalent to His saying with emphasis, "I am the Son of God, as you have suggested."

3. *The Results of the Trial before the Sanhedrin.* Jesus knew the situation before Him perfectly well. One purpose in His direct answer was His desire to bring this sham Trial to a speedy close.

Record of Results
Luke 22:71
Matthew 27:1-2

His words were effective, as He had intended. His persecutors were satisfied. They said, "What fur-

^aCompare *Daniel* 7:13-14.

ther need have we of witnesses? for we ourselves have heard from His own mouth.”⁹ They therefore confirmed against Him the judgment of the previous night, namely, that He was worthy of death. Then “they bound Him, and led Him away, and delivered Him up to Pilate the Governor.” But the words of this quotation, taken from Matthew’s concluding statements concerning the Ecclesiastical Trial, serve also to introduce the Roman Trial of Jesus, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

4. *Incidents during the Trial before the Sanhedrin.* Before closing this chapter, however, it is necessary to notice an important event which happened at the close of this last stage of the Ecclesiastical Trial. That event was the calamity which came upon Judas Iscariot as a result of his treason against the Son of God.¹⁰ In the awful simplicity of the Bible record, the facts of this fate of Judas are told as follows:-

“Then Judas, which betrayed Him, when he saw that He was condemned, repented himself, and brought back the thirty pieces

Suicide of Judas
Matthew 27:3-10
Acts 1:15-26
Cf. John 17:12

of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, ‘I have sinned in that I betrayed innocent blood.’ But they said, ‘What is that to us? See thou to it.’ And he cast down the pieces

1. Sin’s Tragic
Recoil upon Judas
Matthew 27:3-5

of silver into the sanctuary, and departed; and he went away, and hanged himself.” This closing scene in the life of Judas represents the tragic recoil of sin upon the life of one who has sold himself into the power of sin.

Herein was a prophecy fulfilled. Judas, even through his treason, in a way, bore a final testimony to the integrity of the Gospel of the Son of God. When Judas

2. Final Testimony
to Truth of Christ
Matthew 27:6-10
Cf. Zech. 11:10-14

refused to keep the money which he had received in payment for his treason, “the chief priests took the pieces of silver, and said, ‘It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since it is the price of blood.’ And they took counsel, and bought

⁹The Jews had but one central charge against Jesus. They desired to put Him to death because He claimed to be Divine, the Son of God. This fact has heavy emphasis in the last stage of His Ecclesiastical Trial. Christ claimed to be Divine. His enemies, as if to make certain, asked Him if He really meant that He was the Son of God. Jesus strongly affirmed that He was even so: that such exactly was His meaning. His enemies accepted this final statement from Him as satisfactory for their purposes, and acted upon it in putting Him to death. This truth will be very evident in the next chapter, when they recur to this charge, at that point where the Trial finally turns in their favor.

¹⁰See the study of Judas Iscariot, page 140-141. See also the discussion of *John* 6:66-71. in Chapter XII., pages 313-314; and the Bertayal of Jesus, pages 496-515, and 518-519.

with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. Wherefore that field is called, The Field of Blood, unto this day." In this transaction the Rulers of Israel fulfilled an ancient prophecy. It is notable that they *took counsel*, seriously, carefully, and religiously, to do exactly what God had said, more than six centuries before, that they would do. Their blind religious zeal, which led them fanatically to persecute the Son of God, led them also to do a thing at this time which helped to confirm the truth of Him Whom they persecuted.

Such is the fate of men who are blind to the Truth. The enemies of Jesus refused to use for religious purposes the thirty pieces of silver which Judas had cast at their feet. The moral nature of these "conscientious" leaders of the Jews revolted at the thought of using tainted money for the Temple of God. Yet these same Jews were even then planning to murder the Son of God. They revolted at the thought of unhallowed money; yet they were blind to the Perfection of Holiness in Jesus of Nazareth.

3. Fanatical Blindness of the Jews

The trouble was this. The enemies of Christ were keenly alive to the formalized side of religion; but they were utterly dead to the vital Spirit of religion. This is the last truth fully established in the Ecclesiastical Trial of the Lord Jesus Christ. The scene closes with this melancholy proof of the pathetic depths of spiritual insensibility to which His enemies had fallen.

Being dead to the Spirit, the Lord's enemies followed many glaring contradictions in sin. They were caviling about unhallowed money, while they were murdering God's Own Son. They were refusing to use the price of blood, while they were staining their own hands with the Most Innocent Blood. They were careful, on the one hand, not to desecrate their Temple and their religion, and yet they were seeking, on the other hand, an ignominious support from a heathen Roman Government to carry out their fell purposes against the Author of their religion, and the Hope of their once sacred Nation.

Verily the enemies of Jesus were here held in the ironic grip of a fearful fate. In this Ecclesiastical Trial of their rejected Messiah, they had finally and effectively convicted themselves. So this discussion will now turn to a like fate of theirs under the Civil, or Roman Trial of Jesus.

CHAPTER XXII

THE CIVIL TRIAL OF JESUS CHRIST

"The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified His Son Jesus; Whom ye delivered up, and denied Him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and ye killed the Prince of Life." *Acts 3:13-15.*

"And though they found no cause of death in Him, yet desired they Pilate that He should be slain." *Acts 13:28.*

"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, . . . I charge thee in the sight of God, . . . and before Christ Jesus, Who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession." *1. Timothy 6:12-13.*

"For God . . . hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." *2. Corinthians 4:6.*

The First Trial of Jesus Christ, as studied in the preceding chapter, was ecclesiastical. The Second Trial, which is now to be studied, was civil. The First Trial was before the religious Courts of the Jews, constituted under Annas, Caiaphas, and the Sanhedrin. The Second Trial was before the Courts of the Roman Government, represented on this occasion by Pilate and by Herod.

The charge against Jesus in the First Trial was that of blasphemy. His enemies said that Jesus had claimed to be Divine.

**Second Trial of
the Lord Jesus**
*Matthew 27:1-2,
and 27:11-31*
Mark 15:1-20
Luke 23:1-25
*John 18:28-40,
and 19:1-16*

This essential Character, as the Son of God, Jesus confessed openly in the Court. After that confession, the Sanhedrin formally confirmed the previous judgment of the night session of the Court before Caiaphas, declaring that Jesus was worthy of death. When that verdict was reached, the Rulers of the Jews would gladly have gone on to an im-

mediate execution of that judgment, and doubtless would have done so, except for one circumstance that stood in their way of safety in so doing. At that time Palestine was a province of the Roman Empire; and the Jews, because of the Roman Law, dared not attempt to execute that death sentence upon Jesus without first securing the authority and approval of the Roman Government.

The difficulty, however, was not single, but double, which confronted the Jews who were bent upon the death of Jesus.

**Two Problems in
the Second Trial
of Christ**

First, the Roman Imperial Government had taken away from the Jewish Sanhedrin the power to impose the sentence of death upon any person brought before that court. It was therefore necessary that the enemies of Jesus should bring Him before the civil authority of the Court of the Roman Government, which, in Judea, was represented by Pilate.

Furthermore, the question of an effective charge against Jesus before the Roman Court was a problem for the Rulers of the Jews. The pagan courts of Rome cared nothing whatever about the charge of blasphemy, under which the Sanhedrin had condemned Jesus. That judgment of Jesus as being worthy of death was according to a Jewish view of the Jewish law. It therefore involved local matters with which the Roman Government would have nothing to do. The enemies of Jesus saw, therefore, that one of two things was necessary: either they must secure the judgment of the Roman Court without a definite and formal charge against Jesus, or else they must advance some other charge than that for which they had condemned Jesus before their own courts.

What the persecutors of Jesus did under these circumstances is told in this chapter. Their actions were characteristics of their

**General Nature of
the Second Trial
of Jesus**

determination to have Jesus put to death, whatever the cost. They tried, first, to secure the death sentence from the Roman Court without a charge against Jesus. Next, they advanced a charge of treason, under which they failed to attain the conviction of Christ, and the desired sentence of death against Him. Finally, seizing upon a certain turn in the course of the Trial, which gave them a commanding advantage over Pilate, they hectored him into granting an approval, negative though it was, of their pre-determined course of murder.

The whole procedure, which cannot properly be called a trial at all, was a "new Trial," with a new charge of treason, and before a new court. The accusers of the Lord Jesus, and their fell purpose alone were the same. This new Trial, like the former one before the Jewish Courts, was carried through three distinct stages. The first stage was the hearing before Pilate at the first; the second was a brief hearing before Herod; and the third was a final hearing before Pilate, to whom the case was referred for a second time.

I. The First Stage: The First Trial Before Pilate.

The first stage of the Civil, or Roman, Trial of Jesus was before Pilate, the Roman Governor, who was in Jerusalem at that time. This part of the Trial was

First Stage:
Before Pilate
Matthew 27:1-2,
and 27:11-14
Mark 15:1-5
Luke 23:1-7
John 18:28-38

held at an early hour in the morning, as early in fact as the matter could be arranged after the closing of the Ecclesiastical Trial.

The enemies of Jesus, with feet swift to shed blood, hurried with Him, from the Sanhedrin, to the Praetorium, or Palace of

Pilate,¹ before whom Jesus was brought for this stage of His Civil Trial.

¹Judea, at this time, was a part of the Roman Province of Syria, and was governed by procurators, who were subject to the Prefect of Syria. Pontius Pilate, a Roman knight, of whose early history nothing is known, was the fifth (or sixth, as some say) Procurator of Judea, and owed his appointment to this office to the friendship of Sejanus, the powerful minister of the Emperor Tiberius. By the help of Sejanus, Pilate had secured this appointment as Procurator of Judea; and by the same help he held the office for ten years (26—36 A.D.). Finally, however, Pilate was deposed in disgrace, and banished to Vienne, in Gaul, where he committed suicide.

The ten years of Pilate's procuratorship were turbulent years in Judea. The Jews fanatically hated the Roman yoke; and they hated Pilate personally because of his character and methods of government. Pilate, in turn, hated the Jews as a people, and utterly detested their obstinate formalism. He was proud, overbearing, and cruel, a man of ungovernable temper and of "ferocious passions," as Philo says. Like his great patron, Sejanus, Pilate hated the Jews, and almost seems, at times at least, to have taken a sort of vicious delight in living at variance with them. Because of the unsettled state of that period, the procuratorship had been invested with great judicial power, extending even to questions of life and death. Especially was this power great in cases of sedition. For his violent and arbitrary cruelty in the exercise of this power, Pilate was in constant danger of being reported to the Emperor Tiberius. (Compare the situation mentioned in *Luke 13:1*, which may have been suggested for the far-reaching purpose of having Jesus incriminate Himself through some comment adverse to the conduct of Pilate in respect to that act of cruelty). For fear therefore of losing his position, Pilate was always cautious in his judicial dealings with the Jews.

The personal character of Pilate has been well summarized in these words: "He was superstitious and yet cruel; afraid of the people he affected to despise; faithless to the spirit of the authority with which he was lawfully invested. In the great crisis of his history, from the miserably selfish motive of securing his own petty interests, . . . (he) deliberately (gave) up a Man, whom he knew to be innocent, and felt to be noble and pure, to torture, shame, and death." Josephus softened this picture somewhat, attributing to Pilate benevolent and constructive intentions, which he could not carry out because of Jewish fanaticism. But Pilate, as already suggested, was deposed for cruelty and extortion, and banished to Gaul, where he died as cowardly as he had lived.

In Judea, Pilate lived at the customary residence of the procurator in Caesarea; but he had also a temporary residence in Jerusalem. Like the other procurators, Pilate found it wise to visit Jerusalem at the times of the great feasts of the Jews, in order to prevent, or quickly to suppress, any motions toward revolt among the people who assembled there in such multitudes on the festival occasions.

The exact residence of Pilate at this time is a question about which there is difference of opinion. Two answers are possible. He may have occupied then the magnificent Palace of Herod, in the upper part of the city. It is well known that the procurators later did occupy this Palace on such occasions. Some think this likelihood to be greatly enhanced by the fact that Pilate had his wife with him on this occasion (*Matthew 27:19*). The other possible residence at this time was the palace of the Castle of Antonia, which overlooked the north-west corner of the Temple area, and had a close connection therewith. It seems the more probable that this latter was the "palace" to which the members of the Sanhedrin so hurriedly conducted Jesus at the early hour on that fateful Friday morning.

The attitude of Pilate, judicial and personal, toward Jesus, and toward this Trial, is a subject that is full of interest. The multiplied forces brought to bear upon Pilate united in pulling him in two directly opposite directions.

1. *The Setting of the First Trial before Pilate.* The entire Sanhedrin was present, including "the chief priests with the elders and scribes, and the whole council." They brought Jesus bound, probably having His hands tied behind Him, as was then the custom of the courts regarding one who was condemned to death. It was early in the morning, soon after sunrise. Pilate seems to have been ready for receiving them immediately, probably as a result of previous warning, or arrangements, or of personal solicitude on his own account. There was an evident hastening of events.² Jesus was probably taken by the officers into the

Court of Pilate
 Matthew 27:1-2
 Mark 15:1
 Luke 23:1
 John 18:29a

Certainly Pilate was well disposed toward Jesus. There are suggestions that Pilate knew of this approaching Trial before it was referred to him; and some think that he was prepared, possibly by his wife (see note 20, *Matthew* 27:19, and *Acts* 3:13), for a just appreciation of the facts in the case of this Trial. His Roman judicial sense of right and justice, as he viewed the facts, in the light possibly of some direct or indirect knowledge of Jesus, led Pilate to proceed on this occasion with great caution. Some suppose Pilate's first words to Jesus to suggest previous knowledge of the case in hand. Pilate's inveterate hatred of the Jews led him away from granting their suit. When the Trial had begun, the Divine Personality of Jesus, his majesty, His silences, and His words of authority, made a profound impression upon the mind of Pilate. His alternate outbursts of passion, and his sudden quaking with superstitious religious fear, and also his final pettiness in attempting to shift his judicial responsibility in this case, are alike characteristic of the man and the ruler.

But there were forces of an opposite tendency working in the mind and heart of Pilate. He feared the Jews, who could at any time prefer partisan and patriotic charges against him at Rome. He knew well that they had an abundance of definite materials, gathered from his own cruelty and crookedness, to make such charges effective. He knew fully as well that his own accounts were not good already at the Roman Court. He was also aware that his own strong support, the minister Sejanus, had powerful and ambitious enemies at the Court of the Emperor. Pilate loved his position of power, although he deeply hated the people over whom he exercised that power. He therefore finally yielded, in his decision on the case now in hand, to his fear of an act which might endanger that position, and rob him of that power.

In the last analysis, Pilate acted from a cowardly selfish fear. He proved himself, in point of his final action at least, to be a weak and unprincipled man; yet he was not entirely without touches of things noble. Pilate knew the standards of justice, and was naturally disposed to stand by them. He also knew the facts of Christ's innocence, and wanted to defend and to deliver Him. There can be no reasonable doubt about that, as the following study will show. Yet Pilate was weak and selfish enough to figure out the probable political consequences of his actions in this case, and then to base his fatal decision upon selfish expediency as seen in the light of his own expectations.

In his final decision, Pilate put results of action above the rightness of action. He yielded to a line of conduct which contradicted his own convictions of right and duty. Like all men of this character, Pilate is a puzzle. This analysis does not explain him. The following study does not attempt to defend him. Neither does it try to exonerate him. There is an honest effort to analyze the facts as they are; and those facts do reveal Pilate as having a reasonable sense of justice, and a desire to do the right by One Whom he knew to be innocent, and yet as showing a final weak and cowardly acquiescence in a course of action for which even he must have despised himself.

²As seen in the preceding chapter, the irregular night session of the Sanhedrin was entirely illegal. So also was this hurried pronouncement of the death sentence on the same day as that in which the trial was held. Possibly these irregularities were attributable to the powerful influence of Annas and Caiaphas, and the co-operation with them of other Sadducees among the members of the Sanhedrin. But it is even possible that the Pharisees, because of their deep hatred of Jesus, would lay aside their scrupulous care for the law in order to accomplish His death.

³This quibbling about defilement was based, not upon an enactment of law, but upon a purely rabbinic observance. It showed again the depths of formalism into which the Jews had fallen, and the deadening effect of that formalism upon their spiritual perception.

Palace; but the Sanhedrists remained at the door of the Palace, lest they should be difiled,³ and so be excluded from the approaching Passover. For these reasons, Pilate, who was willing, perhaps for special reasons of his own, to comply with the ceremonial situation before him, came out to the Sanhedrists, and the Trial began at once at the door of the Governor's Palace. The persecutors of Jesus had come to Pilate for a sentence of death against the Lord. The facts of the Trial are therefore best analyzed from the standpoint of the success or failure of these rulers of the Jews to attain the purpose which they sought.

2. *The Process of the First Trial before Pilate.* From this standpoint, this first stage of the Roman Trial was a failure. To speak more exactly, this first hearing before Pilate was a series of three efforts of the enemy to secure a death sentence against Jesus, and of three corresponding failures to secure the sentence desired.

The Jews failed at the first to secure the desired sentence because they brought no charge against Jesus. John alone has told about this presumptive step in the process of the Trial of Jesus. In narrating this part of the Trial, which is not told by the earlier writers, John probably had two purposes. He desired to give a clarifying supplement to the earlier records. He desired also to set forth more completely the enormity of the Sanhedrists in their injustice to Jesus.

**1. First Failure:
For Want of a
Charge**

John 18:29-32

**(1) Sanhedrists'
Demand Upon
Pilate**

The things that actually happened in connection with this first failure of the Jews to attain their purpose, according to John's record, were the following. When Pilate had come out into the porch of the Palace, the Jews having the case in charge presented Jesus, and set Him before the Roman Procurator for judgment. Very naturally Pilate asked, "What accusation bring ye against this Man?" To this judicial question, the Jews made answer, "If this Man were not an evil-doer, we should not have delivered Him up unto thee." That is, the rulers of the Jews thus demanded that Pilate take their word for all that had happened, and do as they requested. They simply demanded that Pilate condemn Jesus to death at their own say so, without a trial, without a charge, without even a hearing of any kind.

These Sanhedrists had thus taken judgment out of Pilate's power, and had merely ordered him to speak officially the judg-

ment which they themselves had dictated. Pilate was the type of man who would feel the sting of such usurpation of his power.

His reply was perfectly logical. The Jews had assumed the authority in the case.

(2) Pilate's Logical Refusal Pilate argued, therefore, that they should keep the case within the jurisdiction of their own laws and their own courts. "Take Him yourselves," said Pilate, "and judge Him according to your own law." That proposition was in itself fair and just. Furthermore, Pilate, suspicious of the whole affair from the first, may have tried thus early to shift the responsibility from himself to some other person or persons.

But that he could not do. Neither could the Jews handle this case, as they desired, in their own courts. "It is not lawful," they said, "for us to put a man to death."

(3) Power of an Unseen Destiny There was in this circumstance a deadlock of destiny, which held both Jew and Gentile fast as parties to this crime. The wondrous plan of God, through the complicated relations of Jewish and Roman authority at that time, had united the whole world, symbolized in the Jew and the Roman, in the atrocious crime of murdering the Son of Man. Jesus had signified this fact, as will be remembered, in His previous descriptions of the manner of His own death. This was the logical situation, made by the will of men, which forced a fulfilment of all that the Lord had spoken on this subject.⁴

This first effort of the Jews thus came to naught. Pilate refused to pass judgment upon Jesus without a charge against Him. The enemies of the Lord began, there-

2. Second Failure: For Want of a Sufficient Charge fore, to modify their plans. They probably had a charge, already worked out, which they held in reserve; and so they soon renewed their appeal to Pilate. But the charge preferred, as Pilate saw it, proved to be insufficient to warrant him in giving the death sentence, had he even been disposed to do

so. For this reason, the Jews failed a second time, notwithstanding they urged their appeal with great zeal and force.

⁴See *Matthew* 16:21-28; *Mark* 8:31-38; and *Luke* 9:22-27; *Matthew* 17:22-23; *Mark* 9:30-32; and *Luke* 9:43-45; *Matthew* 20:17-19; *Mark* 10:32-34; and *Luke* 18:31-34.

In these predictions, Christ combined the Jew and the Gentile in the crime of His own death. Moreover, He affirmed that the manner of His death would be significant. Thus symbolically He laid Himself upon the altar of sacrifice for the whole world. Thus, too, He exhibited His self-manifested glory in the hour of His death, before the representatives of the wide world; thus helping to create that "sacred and divine attraction" whereby He should draw all men unto Himself through His death. (*John* 12:32).

The charge preferred was definite, but groundless. In their second appeal to Pilate, the Jews accused Jesus of treason and sedition against the Roman Government. In fact, they magnified this charge in such a manner that even Pilate must have felt their insincerity. With a hypocritical show of patriotic zeal, the rulers of the Jews began to charge Jesus with three counts of treasonable and seditious conduct.⁵ They said, "We found this Man perverting our nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that He Himself is Christ a King."⁶

(1) **Treason**
Charged Against
Jesus by the Jews
Luke 23:2

Pilate doubtless knew that these accusers were insincere, and their accusations probably false; yet these shrewdly worded charges awakened an interest on the part of Pilate. He therefore turned to Jesus, Who must have been inside the Palace, and conducted a sort of private examination of Him touching the most important of these charges, that of His claim to Kingship. This examination, as recorded in some measure by all four of the Gospel Writers, was as follows. When Pilate had entered again into the Palace, he called Jesus, and asked Him, "Art Thou the King of the Jews?" The first three of the Gospel Writers give merely

(2) **Kingship of**
Christ Examined by
Pilate
Matthew 27:11-14
Mark 15:2-5
Luke 23:3
John 18:33-38

⁵The obvious purpose of the Jews was to prejudice the mind of Pilate against Jesus. But they overworked their case. Their hypocrisy, and insincerity, and falsehoods, all must have also been obvious to Pilate. The chief priests hated the Roman Government, and were almost constantly in rebellion against the Roman governors. The Pharisees would have gloried in the patriotism, as they regarded it, of any Jewish leader who had dared to refuse the payment of tribute to Caesar. The whole council of the Jews would have rejoiced in "perverting the nation," as it was then constituted, and in the overthrow of Pilate, the Roman Governor. All of these facts, and many more, the Procurator knew very well. Why then should the rulers of the Jews make such a charge to him as they had made against Jesus of Nazareth! Certainly Pilate must have seen clearly that the entire accusation was but a sham covering for a deeper malice in the hearts of the Jews.

⁶These things, as the reader will remember, were exactly what Jesus had *not* done. Instead of this seditious conduct, Jesus had positively and carefully avoided the giving of offense in every one of these points.

Instead of perverting their nation, Christ had stood before them as an Interpreter of their nation and of its mission. He had corrected their errors, and taught them the truth, political, social, and religious, and had wept over their blindness, and their sin-hardened indifference to the call of God upon their lives. (See *Matthew* 23:1-39, and Chapter XVIII, pages 461-467.)

Instead of forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, Jesus paid the Roman tax Himself, providing the money for Himself and for Peter. (See *Matthew* 17:24-27, and the discussion of this passage in Chapter XIV). Jesus also expressly taught others to pay their dues to the Roman Government. (see *Matthew* 22:15-22, and the parallel passages, and the discussion of them in Chapter XVIII.)

Instead of setting Himself up as an earthly king among the Jews, as they suggested to Pilate in this charge, Jesus had positively disallowed His enthusiastic followers to take any steps toward making Him their King. (See *John* 6:1-15, and the discussion of this and the parallel passages, in Chapter XI). The charge of treason and sedition remained a popular one against Jesus, and against His followers. (See *Acts* 17:7).

Christ's affirmative answer, "Thou sayest." But John has quoted Jesus as asking a counter-question concerning the origin of this

**a. Discussion of
Christ's Kingship
John 18:33-37**

idea of Christ's Kingship in the mind of Pilate.⁷ Pilate, by his contemptuous reply, showed at once that he knew nothing of a spiritual kingdom, but that he could think only in terms of nations, and rulers, and worldly powers.

Christ therefore attempted to give Pilate's barren mind an idea of a spiritual kingdom. "My Kingdom," said the Lord, "is not of this world." The Kingdom of Christ is entirely opposite to the worldly ideas of conquest and power, of getting and possessing. Christ's Kingdom is one of giving and serving, of liberating and blessing.⁸ Out of this statement Pilate got at least one clear idea: that Jesus, in some sense, must be a King. To confirm this idea, Pilate asked Jesus, "Art Thou a King then?"⁹

⁷At first thought, this question of Jesus might suggest that He had not heard the charge made against Him by the Jews. But that supposition, which may be true, is wholly unnecessary to a consistent interpretation of these events. Jesus Christ was omniscient. He was also, here as elsewhere, in sovereign control of the situation. He desired to draw out the mind of Pilate, and was here exercising His own sovereign liberty to discuss, with the representative of the Roman Government, the true nature of His own Divine Kingdom. The question was probably intended to search out in the mind of Pilate an apperceptive basis for presenting to him the explanation which Jesus gave a moment later.

⁸"My Kingdom," said Christ, "is not of this world." "Neither now, nor at any future period," says a good comment on this passage, "will (Christ's Kingdom) derive its origin from this world. So far as Christ is King, His royal power and state are not furnished by earthly force, or fleshly ordinances, or physical energies, or material wealth, or imperial armies. The dominion that He will wield will be one over hearts and lives; the authority of the Lord Jesus cannot be arrested or over-powered by physical force The Kingdom that sprang directly from Heaven must have absolute authority over all the earth, and it will not submit to be put into obscurity. The Kingdoms of this world must become the Kingdom of the Lord and His Anointed, and He shall reign for ever and ever.

"This is true, but not along the lines or with the machinery of earthly rule and authority. The influence and authority of Heaven works upon the spirit by truth and righteousness and peace, and thus transforms institutions, permeates society from the ground of the heart, modifies the relations between the members of a household, and transfigures those between a ruler and his subjects, between the master and his slaves, between labour and capital, and between man and man. Whenever it is triumphant, whenever the lives of kings and their peoples are sanctified by supreme obedience to Christ the King, then war will be impossible, all tyrannies and slaveries will be abolished, all malice and violence of monarchs or mobs will be at an end Then all the means for enforcing the will of one against another will be done away. (Christ) will have put down all rule, authority, and power; for He must reign, and He alone. This Kingdom does not begin from without and establish itself, or propagate or preserve itself, from the world, which is a rival, and is not to be coerced but drawn to itself. Like the individual disciple, the Kingdom may be *in* the world, but not *of* (the world)."

⁹Some have supposed that this question of Pilate was only an outburst of ironic surprise. But it was not. He had already satisfied himself that Jesus was not a political rival. Yet Jesus had solemnly defined the nature of His Kingdom, which, since it was spiritual, Pilate did not understand. Probably by this time the exhibition of sovereign majesty in the Son of God had begun to awe Pilate. This probability is supported by the recorded amazement of Pilate which almost immediately followed, and by the further fact, that Pilate was soon very eager to shift his responsibility in this case to King Herod. For these, and possibly other reasons, it would seem that Pilate's question, "Art Thou a King then?" was not ironic, but direct and sincere. Pilate desired to know more about this unusual situation which now confronted him, and about Jesus, Who was central to that situation.

This question Jesus answered with a strong affirmative. "Thou sayest that I am a King."¹⁰ Then Jesus, with careful discrimination between His Human and His Divine Natures, stated two facts. On His Human side, as a Man, Jesus declared Himself born into the world for the purpose of establishing a Kingdom of Truth. On His Divine side, He had left, as He explained, His place with the Eternal Father in Heaven, and had come to the world for the same purpose. He added then a third statement of fact: that every person who has the necessary apperceptive basis of truth will both recognize and favorably respond to Himself as the Son of God, and Divine Sovereign of the world.

These solemn words, with their suggestion of *Truth*, awakened in Pilate the philosophical mood, and he asked, "What is truth?"

**b. Subsequent
Silence of Jesus
Matthew 27:12-14
Mark 15:3-5
John 18:38**

But Jesus remained silent. He had given Pilate *the Truth*; and that was enough. The Son of God did not talk speculative philosophy: He talked the vital truth of God, by which men live and die, and are judged for eternal life and death. Probably Pilate, during

this moment of silence, received a new sense of the Divine majesty of Jesus Christ. What this pagan Governor might have said next is an interesting question. But he said nothing more in that line of thought: for the scene was interrupted from without.

The impatient Jews at the door were clamoring for their sentence of death upon Jesus. The chief priests and the elders accused Jesus of many things: but He remained silent. Then Pilate took up the cry of those outside, saying to Jesus, "Answerest Thou nothing? Behold how many things they accuse Thee of!" And then, for the third time in rapid succession, Jesus made no reply. Doubtless the Divine majesty of Jesus was much in evidence at that time. His silence, which Matthew declared to have been absolute, was so impressive that the Roman Governor marvelled greatly.

It is very evident that the Divine Personality of Jesus was working a deep effect upon the mind of Pilate. The impression, as it appears, was entirely favorable. Pilate therefore went out again to the Jews, and said, "I find no crime in Him." By this definite decision the Jews had failed a second time to attain the death sentence upon Jesus, and so had failed again in the purpose for which they had brought Christ before Pilate.

**(3) Jesus Declared
Innocent by Pilate
Luke 23:4
John 18:38**

¹⁰Possibly it was to this answer that Paul referred in 1. Timothy 6:13.

But as soon as Pilate had announced his decision, the determined leaders of the Jews renewed their efforts. Luke suggests that they frantically urged against Jesus the charge of seditious teaching. "He stirreth up the people," they said, "teaching throughout all Judea, and beginning from Galilee even unto this place."

3. Third Failure: By a Shifting of the Trial to Herod
Luke 23:5-7

But one word in those charges was fatal, for the present, to the purposes of Christ's enemies. Pilate was already fully convinced that Jesus was innocent. Pilate was also standing in awe of Jesus because of His majestic Personality, and His sovereign silences on this occasion. Pilate feared the Jews; and he was also ill at ease respecting Jesus. The wily Procurator therefore caught quickly the incidental suggestion of *Galilee*. Therein he saw at once an opportunity of shifting the responsibility of this case over to Herod, the ruler in Galilee. This Pilate did at once, and conveniently, for Herod was in Jerusalem at that time. So Pilate sent Jesus away to Herod; and through this shifting of the Trial, the Jews, a third time, lost their decision before Pilate.

Pilate's Effort to Shift the Responsibility to Herod
Luke 23:6-7

II. The Second Stage: The Trial before Herod

The enemies of Jesus, having failed of their purposes against Him before Pilate, followed the Lord when He was transferred, by the Roman officers from the court of Pilate to that of Herod,¹¹ where, as it is recorded by Luke, the second stage of the Roman Trial took place. The record here is

Second Stage:
Before Herod
Luke 23:8-12

¹¹This was Herod Antipas, who had put to death John the Baptist. (*Matthew* 14:1-12; *Mark* 6:14-19; *Luke* 9:7-9, and the previous discussion of John's death in Chapter XI, note 12). This Herod was the youngest son of Herod the Great, by whose last will this son, was made ruler (or "Tetrarch") of Galilee and Perea. Sometimes, by courtesy, he was called King Herod. His usual residence was in Capernaum, or Tiberius, in Galilee. He was in Jerusalem at this time on account of the Passover occasion, though Herod had, of course, no religious interest in this festival. Like his father, though not so able a man and ruler, this Herod was ambitious, luxurious, superstitious, crafty, and vindictive. He was also a man of dissolute morals, living in adultery and incest, in drunkenness and revelry, and being especially pleased with low forms of entertainment abhorrent to the social standards of that time. He was a lover of the extravagant, the spectacular, and the unusual.

Yet Herod had some good in his nature, as was seen in the influence over him by John the Baptist, whom Herod feared and learned to respect. (*Mark* 6:20, 26). His life was a conflict between the good and the evil in his nature; and the latter triumphed in his ultimate ruin. In the year 39 A.D., he was deposed by Caligula, when, instigated by his wife Herodias, Herod ambitiously sought the title of "King." This happened at Rome, where he is said to have been terrified by a Banquo-like reappearance of John the Baptist. Later, by the Roman Senate, Herod was banished, with his wife Herodias, to Lyons, where they both died miserably. Such was the profligate judge who was now to sit in judgment on Jesus of Nazareth; and such was the man who rejoiced in the opportunity of at last making a side-show of the Son of God.

brief, consisting of only three points of historical interest: for the whole incident was pitched by Herod himself on a level that was decidedly below the dignity of legal procedure. This fact adds great pathos to this part of the Lord's Trial. The Son of God was presented by a mob, at the court of a libertine, and was there received on the level of a cheap vaudeville.

1. *Herod's Pleasure at Seeing Jesus.* On this low level Herod "was exceeding glad" to see Jesus; "for he was a long time desirous to see Him, because he had heard concerning Him; and he hoped to see some miracle (sign, or wonder) done by Him. And he questioned Him in many words."

Nature of Herod's
Interest in Jesus
Luke 23:8-9a

Evidently Herod's interest in seeing Jesus had no immediate connection with religion; although Herod does belong to that class of cowardly men who, on the principle of the small boy keeping up his courage by whistling in the dark, would, in order to "bluff it" in sin, make sport of the Judgment Throne of God. Ultimately, such may have been Herod's own covert purpose at this time.

Outwardly, however, Herod's first attitude toward Jesus was that of pleasure-loving curiosity. For sake of self-gratification, as it appears, Herod showed a friendly spirit. His interest here was theatrical. Previously, his interest in Jesus had been one of superstitious speculation.¹² A moment later Herod will become a sort of buffoon stage-master himself, not without a touch of vindictiveness in his sport. For the present, however, Herod was merely looking for a show. He wanted to see this Wonder-Worker perform a miracle. That was Herod's present attitude toward the Son of God.

2. *The Dignified Silence of the Son of God.* But Herod, in his low anticipations, was destined to a well-deserved disappoint-

¹²From an early day, Jesus was a Personage of concern to Herod. One wonders if they had ever met before this occasion. Evidently Herod had felt, indirectly at least, the power of the Son of God and His mighty words in Galilee. The great popularity of Jesus there would have exercised the mind of Herod, and suggested both care and fear on his part. When he had killed John the Baptist, there was something in this death of His great Forerunner which led Jesus at once to shift, for a time, the scenes of His own activities. (Matthew 14:12-13). With a curious interest, partly speculative, Herod watched the career of Jesus, and felt constrained, in some way, to account for the Personality and the power of the Great Teacher and Minister. This Herod did, on one occasion, by affirming, possibly under the influence of the then current view of Pythagoras on the transmigration of souls, that Jesus was the spirit of John the Baptist risen to life again, and re-appearing in Jesus of Nazareth. (Mark 6:14). Certainly Herod was concerned about Jesus: for there must have been some background suggestion for the warning which the Jews issued to Jesus, and for the reply of Jesus thereto, when they tried to use the name of Herod as an instrument of terror to the Son of God. (See Luke 13:31-35, and the discussion of it in Chapter XVI). "Go," said Jesus, Who knew well this crafty ruler, "and say to that fox (literally, 'that she-fox') that (My program is beyond the reach of his power to interfere)." That is what Jesus meant at that time. Here at last, possibly for the first time, and yet possibly not, Jesus and Herod had met face to face, after the long desire of Herod to meet Jesus, and to see Him work a miracle.

ment. The Son of God never lowered His Divine prerogative to the level of self-gratification, or to mere public display for the gratification of others. That question, among others, was settled for Satan himself, on the Mountain of Temptation. Services of love, and testimony to the Truth, alone are worthy to call forth an exercise of Divine Power. Herod was trying to deal with the God of Heaven on the level of cheap show. But the Lord Jesus maintained a dignified and sovereign silence, which was entirely worthy of His Divine Character.

**Sovereign Silence
of Jesus**

Luke 23:9b-10

Herod "questioned (Jesus) in many words; but He answered him nothing. And the chief priests and the scribes stood, vehemently accusing Him." But Jesus remained silent. So far as the charges against Him were concerned, Jesus needed only to keep silent; for He knew even then what was forthcoming from the mind of Herod, who the next moment showed such levity of spirit as would never regard this Trial with sufficient seriousness to pass a judgment.

3. *Herod's Buffoonery at the Expense of Jesus.* Instead of listening to the charges, and giving Jesus a decent hearing in some

**Herod's Mockery
of Jesus**

Luke 23:11-12

form of Trial, Herod turned buffoon. With the assistance of the soldiers, he made sport of the Lord Jesus, Who was ever ready to suffer indignity, but never to degrade Himself. Herod planned his raillery against Jesus as against an extreme religious enthusiast. He "set Him at nought." He "mocked Him." He arrayed "Him in gorgeous apparel," probably in some old white garments, as ironic symbols of His superior sanctity.

Such things seem somewhat foreign to the superstitious and fearful-minded Herod. But even these things were possible to Herod on the basis of vindictive treatment for the silence of the Lord Jesus in the early part of this scene. These are the things that did happen. But one likes to speculate as to what might have happened, if Jesus had fulminated against Herod a bit of that Divine Power which had been so effective at the time of the arrest of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. If the Lord had so responded, the irony of Herod's desire to see a *wonder* would have been perfect. But the Son of God could not retaliate. Meekly He made Himself perfect through His sufferings.¹⁸

4. *The Results of the "Trial" before Herod.* In the sense last suggested above, this incident before Herod was a *trial*, but not

¹⁸See *Hebrews* 2:10.

In any legal sense of the word was it so. The results, in addition to the maltreatment already mentioned, were of two kinds.

First, Herod, declining to treat the case with legal seriousness, sent Jesus, arrayed in the "gorgeous apparel," back to Pilate. Such was the manner in which Herod disposed of the case: he thrust the responsibility of the case back upon Pilate. In this turn of the affair, the enemies of the Lord again failed to secure any Roman approval of their purpose of murder against Him Whom they desired to destroy.

Second, Pilate and Herod "became friends that very day: for before they were at enmity between themselves." This unexpected result, wherein the hostile forces of the world came together in common cause against Jesus Christ, a fact frequently repeated since that day, made a profound impression.¹⁴ In this result was felt the truth, that, while men were striving to have their own evil way, God was still going on with His triumphing purposes of saving grace in the world.

III. The Third Stage: The Final Trial before Pilate

The Jews failed to accomplish anything at all before Herod. They therefore, with greater determination than ever, followed the case back to Pilate, where the final stage of the Roman Trial of Jesus took place. This part of the Trial, occurring later in the morning, was somewhat more formal than either of the previous stages had been since the matter had been transferred to the civil authorities. But the process of this final court was not a trial in any proper sense of

the word. It was more like a death-grapple between Pilate and the enemies of Christ. Pilate knew that Jesus was innocent, and desired to save Him from the fanatical mob. The enemies of Jesus were determined to have Roman sanction of their purpose to put Him to death.

In the conflict that followed from these opposing attitudes, both parties were determined from the first, but Pilate gradually lost ground. For the death sentence against Jesus, His enemies were ready to surrender even their own moral, religious, and national self-respect. If necessary, they were ready to grovel, as they actually did do, even at the feet of a despised Roman Procurator.

¹⁴See the lyrical expression of Peter and John and others, who incorporated this fact in their song of praise. *Acts* 4:24-30.

They were ready for hectoring the Governor, and even for resorting to physical force, if that were a means that promised to attain their purpose. As the struggle advanced through this last stage of the Trial, there were five central points of increasing tension. Four of these five points, as the following outline will show, were definite efforts of Pilate to save Jesus from the frenzied will of His mob-like accusers.¹⁵

1. Pilate's First Effort to Save Jesus: the Choice of a Prisoner. When the officers returned from Herod, bringing Jesus again to Pilate, he called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, and began at once his formal efforts to save Jesus from their violent hands.

Knowing well that Jesus was innocent, Pilate began, in a judicial way, to justify what he was about to propose as his own course of action in this case. He therefore reviewed the Trial up to this last stage. In this survey of what had already happened, it seems that Pilate was both fair and just, as he saw the facts. The record of this review of the Trial, as given by Luke, is as follows.

**1. Pilate's Review
of the Trial
Luke 23:13-16**

Pilate stated the case. "Ye brought unto me this Man, as one that perverteth the people." Then Pilate retraced the steps of the Trial, reciting first the previous hearing of the case by himself. "I, having examined Him before you, found no fault in this Man touching those things whereof ye accuse Him." Continuing this recital, Pilate related the same conclusion as coming from Herod. "No, nor yet Herod: for he sent Him back to us; and behold, nothing worthy of death hath been done by Him."¹⁶

¹⁵In this struggle between Pilate and the Jews, it is interesting to notice how clearly they were both striving consciously to work out their own opposing wills; and yet they were combining, in the deeper sense, to work out the pre-determined plan of God. (See Acts 2:23).

¹⁶Although the so-called Trial before Herod was a farce, as already described, yet Pilate's conclusion from that Trial as to the innocence of Jesus was within the logic of the facts, as given in the sacred records. Apparently Herod did not pass a formal judgment of any kind upon Jesus. Herod was, in fact, so far from condemning Jesus that he did not even regard Jesus seriously as a criminal. Whence then Pilate's authority for saying that Herod had found no fault in Jesus?

Possibly this. Herod and Pilate had become friends "that very day." Possibly Herod also, upon a second or after thought, had desired to rescue Jesus from the mob. This desire may have led Herod to send a hasty message to Pilate, after the departure of Jesus, warning the Procurator to proceed with caution respecting this innocent and powerful Person, about Whom for so long Herod had felt such deep concern. Such a message, conferring as it did both an official and a personal favor, would have gone far toward bringing together in friendship the previously alienated Roman rulers. In fact, the recognition in the sacred record of this fact of their renewed friendship suggests the attachment of great importance to this fact. The emphasis given to this event seems to warrant one in supposing, on the basis of this renewed friendship, that there had been some kind of personal conference on that day between Herod and Pilate. In that case, Pilate may have spoken here from a very definite knowledge of Herod's serious estimate of Jesus Christ. This is quite possible, if not indeed very probable.

That decision was definite, and, as Pilate then thought, final. He proposed, therefore, to chastise Jesus, and release Him.

**(2) Pilate's
Proposal to Release
Jesus**

Such a treatment of an innocent person was very unjust and cruel; but it was a common custom in Oriental courts. There was a general assumption in those days that a person who had been brought into court was in need, on general principles, of at least some measure of punishment. By resorting to this custom, Pilate hoped to secure the release of Jesus.

**(3) Pilate's
Weakening
Compromise**

But Pilate hoped for more than that, as the Jews were quick to see. He was dealing with a dangerous group, and he knew the danger. There was a standing animosity between Pilate and the Jews. His mind was also opposed to theirs respecting the case of Jesus then before the court. This chastisement of Jesus which Pilate proposed was an offered compromise of weakness, meanness, and cowardice, to appease his own adversaries. Pilate feared the Jews; and here was the first degree of his yielding to that fear, through which at last he was compelled to surrender Jesus to be crucified. The Jews probably saw their advantage here in its inception. Certainly they were ready to follow it up in the next move that was made by Pilate.

Pilate had decided to release Jesus. But before carrying out that decision, Pilate sought to strengthen his action with the Jews by making them approve what he was about to do. He desired to make his action appear as theirs also. In order to do so, he resorted to a popular plan, ready made, which he thought could not fail to serve his purpose. That ready made plan was the old custom of releasing to the people, on the feast day, a prisoner whom they should choose.¹⁷ This customary option of a prisoner Pilate proposed on this occasion. However, he took great care to shape up the circumstances of the popular choice so that, as he thought, the liberation of Jesus would be a necessity.

¹⁷This custom was probably introduced by the Roman governors, since there is no other mention of such a custom among the Hebrews. The Latins, however, and the Greeks also, had a practice of this kind, in honor of their gods. But some suppose this to have been an ancient Hebrew custom, in honor of the Exodus from Egypt, and maintained as a collateral part of the Passover Feast, and observed by the Roman governors. Mark has intimated that the first suggestion of this custom at this time came from the people. (*Mark* 15:8). But this statement is not out of harmony with the idea, which is supported by John (18:39), that Pilate immediately caught up this popular suggestion, as a plan usable for his own purposes, and officially submitted his proposition to the people.

Pilate laid out a plan which, as he thought, involved only two possible alternatives. He had so planned the matter in his own mind that the choice by the Jews of either alternative would liberate Jesus, with at least an apparent approval on the part of the Jews. By this plan Pilate hoped both to relieve himself of this troublesome case of judgment, and also to strengthen at the same time his own position before the Jews whom he feared.

**(1) Pilate's Plan
for Two
Alternatives**

Pilate's first purpose was to have the Jews concur in his own release of Jesus. To this end, he planned to control, or to determine, their choice of Jesus as the prisoner to be released on this occasion.

**a. Pilate's First
Alternative**

Pilate's plan was as follows. He limited the option of a prisoner to a choice between two prisoners, Christ being one of the two.¹⁸ Over against Jesus, Who was meek, innocent, and majestic, Pilate set up Barabbas,¹⁹ a man deliberately chosen by Pilate, who had obviously selected for this purpose the worst prisoner then available. Between these two, Jesus and Barabbas, Pilate never supposed it possible that any set of men could make but one choice. So Pilate made his plans, relying upon the reason of the Jews, their moral integrity, and their already avowed loyalty to Rome, for Barabbas was a well-known seditionist, to compel them to choose Jesus as the prisoner to be set free at that time.

Pilate probably never doubted for a moment the effect of this first alternative. Yet his plan embraced another possibility. His second alternative was the hope of creating dissension among the multitude of the Jews.

**b. Pilate's Second
Alternative**

In this way, he hoped to break up the Trial, and bring it to nought. Pilate knew that Jesus was popular with the people, many of whom were then present. He knew also that "for envy the chief priests had delivered Him up." In these opposite feelings toward Jesus Pilate saw the possibility

¹⁸There was a sort of irony of fate in Pilate's use of the name "Christ" (*Matthew* 27:17), when he presented the choice between Jesus and Barabbas. It was as if Pilate had been providentially appointed to warn the Jews once more, that this "Jesus which is called the Christ" may be, in fact, the Messiah of Israel, Him for Whom they hoped; and that even yet they might, by accepting Him, prove themselves worthy of having descended from the once chosen people of God.

¹⁹This interpretation of Pilate's purpose in thus setting Barabbas over against Jesus is strongly supported by the emphasis which all the Gospel Writers have laid upon the criminality of Barabbas. He was a "notable prisoner," and "a robber," who "For insurrection and murder was cast into prison." He was a notorious criminal, who, as a lawless chief carrying on his career of a bandit under the veil of patriotism, had recently stirred up bloody insurrection in the city and had committed murder, and now lay bound with his fellow criminals in prison. Such was the man whom Pilate set over against the Lord Jesus, and bade the people choose between the two.

of an effective variance between the people and the generally despised priests, such as would break up the Trial scene in confusion.

Pilate had also another reason for placing Barabbas before the people. Bad as he was, Barabbas, who was an insurrectionist, almost certainly had many sympathizers among the rulers of the Jews, and also among the common people. He possibly was a popular leader and hero of the anti-imperial, or national party. In that case, those who sympathized with Barabbas would have chosen him at once, except for this fact: to do so was to give an open affront to Pilate and to the Roman Government. Pilate had probably planned that the fear of the Roman power should restrain from the choice of Barabbas, and so liberate Jesus.

Moreover, Pilate had probably intended that his plan for the choice of the prisoner should force the rulers of the Jews to help him in his decision to liberate Jesus. It is true that they were clamoring most for the death sentence. But they had already posed as having a superior loyalty to Rome. Pilate seems to have supposed that these rulers of the Jews would have to stand by their previous profession of loyalty. They could not, therefore, as he thought, choose Barabbas. They would, for the same reason, be compelled to set themselves against any popular movement to choose this leader of insurrection. The result of the situation, as Pilate had worked it out in his own mind, would be a necessary choice of Jesus, and a probable strife among the many factions then at the court.

So on two counts, as he had reasoned the matter out, Pilate expected a discussion to arise among those who might differ among themselves as to which of the two prisoners they should choose. For this reason, seemingly, he had limited the customary option, and had set up these two, Jesus and Barabbas. Besides the hope of disagreement that would break up the Trial, Pilate did not believe that the Jews could, or would, choose Barabbas instead of Jesus. Apparently Pilate relied upon the moral argument as applied to the Jews, and upon their common fear of the Roman Government.

What was to be the result? For a moment, as the records seem to suggest, there was a pause after Pilate had submitted the two alternatives. During this time he probably congratulated himself upon the certainty of his plans to work out as he had intended. His gratification in his own sagacity was augmented, no doubt, by the message from his wife: for it was during this brief silence that he received the message from her, insisting that he

"have . . . nothing to do with that Righteous Man."²⁰ Pilate felt that he had his plans securely made. Confidently he waited—but it was only for a moment.

He waited the moment. Then, lo, the unexpected happened! The people chose Barabbas, and clamoured that Jesus might be crucified. Pilate had thought that he had predetermined one of two results: either the people must choose Jesus, or else they would disagree and quarrel among themselves. But Pilate had mislaid his plans. He had not fully measured the bitterness of the chief priests and the scribes against Jesus. Pilate had relied upon reason and moral sanity, when he was, in fact, dealing with a mob, led by fanatics, who knew no moral consistency, and paused at no fear in the attainment of their evil purposes.

This decision of the people was the result of quick and effective propaganda on the part of the enemies of Jesus. They saw that the situation had fallen under their control, and away from Pilate, and they industriously made fast their advantage. When Pilate had submitted to the people the option of a prisoner, the chief priests and the scribes went down at once among the people, and persuaded them to choose Barabbas. Marks says that the rulers "stirred up the multitude" for that purpose. So successful was this agitation, that the cry soon arose, "Away with this Man, and release unto us Barabbas!" One can easily see the rulers of the Jews, as in the fake proclamation of Richard the Third in Shakespeare's play,²¹ themselves doing the loudest of the shouting.

²⁰The name of Pilate's wife, according to tradition, was Claudia. She was said to have been a convert to the Jewish religion. (See the apocryphal *Gospel of Nicodemus*, chapter ii.) Some ancient accounts claim that she later became a christian. She has been canonized by the Greek Church, and given a place in the Menologium on October 27.

She was a woman of an alert mind, and a responsive spirit, and quite able to meet the situations to which her husband's office had called her. In fact, the brief references to her in history suggest that she may have been quite the superior of the two. The mention of her presence, and her interest in this Trial, bears in an interesting way upon the accuracy of Matthew's record of the Gospel: for it was only a short time before this event, according to Tacitus (*Annals*, iii. 33), that the Roman law was so amended as to allow the governors to take their wives with them into their official districts.

Claudia certainly knew something definite about Jesus, and was favorably disposed toward Him. Probably she had seen Him, and heard Him; and possibly she believed in Him. The fact that she knew so definitely about the Trial of Jesus then in progress is in accord with the other fact, that Pilate apparently was ready very early that morning to receive the Sanhedrists when they brought Jesus, soon after sunrise, to the Palace. Both facts argue that there had probably been a preliminary conference with Pilate, and that the Governor and his wife had talked over this perplexing problem together. Some think that it was Pilate's wife who had aroused him to make his persistent effort to save Jesus from the mob. What her dream was no one can now know. The substance of her warning was, "Do nothing that you will regret hereafter."

²¹*Richard the Third*, III. 7. 1-43. Compare also Chapter XXIV, page 819, below.

The importance of this choice of Barabbas instead of Jesus can scarcely be over-estimated. It was the turning point in the Trial of Jesus.²² By it Pilate was entrapped in his own plans. Herein was revealed his tragic error; he had misjudged the mind of the mob with which he was dealing. In this one mis-step, he virtually surrendered the case into the hands of the Jews. Onward from that moment, Pilate was, more and more hopelessly, on the defensive. At last he gave up Jesus into the hands of the mob, but not until after he had failed in several efforts more to rescue Jesus from the hands of His enemies.

2. Pilate's Second Effort to Save Jesus: Compromise Again.
Pilate at once protested this decision. Immediately he began a

**Second Effort to
Save Jesus**

Matthew 27:22-30

Mark 15:12-19

Luke 23:20-25

John 19:1-3

For some time Pilate held up the liberation of Barabbas, in the hope that there might be some just outcome of the situation. The spirit of the Roman judge rose within Pilate. For a moment, at least, he asserted himself, in a manly way, in defense of justice. But he soon saw that this was of no avail in the face of the mob. His weakness again prevailed, and he fell back upon the expediency of compromise with the enemies of the Lord Jesus.

This second effort of Pilate to set Jesus free is full of pathos. The general incident has two points of central interest. It begins with Pilate, who is strenuously and hopelessly on the defensive. It closes with Jesus again in the foreground, in the scenes of humiliating abuse to which He was subjected by the compromise of Pilate. Throughout the incident of this second effort, Pilate played a losing game against those from whom he would gladly have delivered the Lord Jesus.

Pilate was startled when the Jews chose Barabbas. The Governor protested at once, saying, "What then shall I do unto Jesus Which is called the Christ?" The multitude, who were fully inspired by His enemies, cried out, "Let Him be crucified." But Pilate's Roman sense of justice refused, at first, to tolerate that idea. He protested still further, saying, "Why, what evil hath this Man done? I have found no cause of death in Him: I will therefore

²²It was to this almost unthinkable decision in the Trial of Jesus that Peter referred in his memorable exaltation of the Risen Savior. (Acts 3:12-18).

chastise Him and release Him." But the Jews cried out with loud voices, saying, "Let Him be crucified!" By this time it was clear to Pilate that this compromise, unjust and cruel as it was, was not a satisfaction to the blood-thirsty enemies of Jesus, who desired to put Him to death.

Pilate's religious fear had been awakened by the warning message from his wife. His carefully laid plan to liberate Jesus had resulted in worse than failure: he was himself the victim of that plan. His judicial honor was in revolt against the course of action which now seemed to be unavoidable. Finally, he saw himself, perhaps with humbled pride and deepening resentment of spirit, in the hands of the rising mob. "Their voices prevailed." Pilate was the unwilling servant of those whom, both from his personal feelings and his sense of justice, he would like to drive with scorn from his very presence. But he was in their hands, and subject to their command.

Some things, half cowardly, half noble, Pilate yet could do. He could cowardly consent to the death of Jesus. He could try, all in vain of course, to disclaim his own responsibility in the death of Jesus. But he could also refuse to admit that Jesus was guilty, or worthy of death. All of these things Pilate did in one act, when he took water, and washed his hands, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this righteous Man: see ye to it." The enemies of Jesus were ready to pay this price also, and to bond the souls of their children for the guilt of this unspeakable crime against the Son of God. They said, "His blood be on us, and on our children."²³

Matthew, Mark, and Luke practically close their respective records of the Trial at this point. They make the end turn upon the different ways in which Pilate disposed of Barabbas and Jesus. However, Matthew and Mark are careful to state that the surrender of Jesus did not take place until after the scourging by the Roman soldiers; and this scourging Matthew, Mark, and John agree in placing after the delivery of Barabbas to the people.

²³These words are a reflection of *Joshua* 2:19; *2. Samuel* 1:16; and *1. Kings* 2:32. Compare also *Acts* 5:28, which shows that the Jews did not forget this solemn assumption of guilt. For this judicial murder of Jesus the Jews wanted the sanction and protection of the Roman law; but Peter and others laid the guilt of it squarely upon the Jews. (*Acts* 2:23; 3:15; 5:28; *James* 5:5-6; and *Revelation* 11:8). *Acts* 5:28 shows that the Apostles were effective in making this guilt felt; and *Revelation* 11:8 shows that John regarded the murder of Jesus as the work of Jerusalem turned heathen at the very worst.

It is highly probable that Pilate did, at this time, surrender Barabbas to the people, as a means of quieting the rising tumult. Apparently also Pilate ordered the scourging of Jesus, after the surrender of Barabbas. Probably Pilate was using both of these incidents in his attempt to play for time, and to regain his lost advantage over the multitude. From John's record of intervening events, it is very clear that Pilate did not, for quite a while yet, relinquish his possession of Jesus as a Roman prisoner of state.

Finally, Pilate carried out his suspended proposition for a compromise, as it seemed. Although he had, apparently at least, already consented that the Jews might do their will with Jesus, yet Pilate delivered Him to the Roman soldiers to scourge, and to mock in a shameful manner. Outwardly, this seems to have been a useless thing to do. Yet Pilate may have had even in this cruelty, as later events seem to suggest, a hope of liberating Jesus.

The facts of the scourging are given by Mark as follows: "And the soldiers led Him away within the court, which is the Praetorium; and they call together the whole band. And they clothe Him with purple, and plaiting a crown of thorns, they put it on Him; and they began to salute Him, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' And they smote His head with a reed, and did spit upon Him, and bowing their knees worshipped Him."

Thus the heathen Roman soldiers treated Jesus. With royal purple and a crown of thorns, they mocked the royalty of Heaven's appointed King. With jeers, they scorned the nationality of God's Promised Messiah. With cruel smiting and spitting upon, they insulted the Manhood of the Son of Man. With mocking worship, they blasphemed the Divinity of the Son of God. Such was the manner in which Jesus suffered at the hands of Pilate, who hoped thus to appease the Jews by compromise.

3. Pilate's Third Effort to Save Jesus: Refusal to Give a Roman Sentence. Pilate, although he had probably ordered all of the cruelty which has been described above, as an appeasement to the Jews, yet refused to surrender Jesus into the hands of the chief priests and the scribes. Instead of that,

**Third Effort to
Rescue Jesus**
John 19:4-6

According to the supplementary records of John's Gospel, Pilate tried a third time, and even a fourth as noted later, to rescue Jesus from the violent hands of the Jews. In this third effort, Pilate gave the Jews to understand, in a manner that was final,

that he would not sentence to death this Innocent Man, and that the execution, if they carried it out, would be done on their own responsibility.

In making this third effort to save Jesus, Pilate made use of a threefold argument with the Jews. First, he declared again his firm confidence in the innocence of Jesus.

1. Pilate's Appeal to Common Justice "Behold, I bring Him out to you," said Pilate, by way of announcing his intention to bring Jesus out from the Palace, and to exhibit Him to the Jews, "that ye may know that I find no crime in Him." In these words, the Governor made a direct appeal to the common sense of justice which he supposed to be accessible in the heart of every man, even in the fanatical Jews then before his own judgment seat.

But this sense of justice failed to function at that time, and in those hearts. Pilate therefore tried next to touch some chord of pity in their souls. When "Jesus therefore came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple garment," Pilate's own heart was, it seems, deeply and sincerely moved. Pointing to this spectacle of unjust and unhuman cruelty, he said to the Jews, "*Behold, the Man!*"

There is no doubt of Pilate's purpose. He intended, if it were possible, to arouse some feeling of sympathy in the heart of the Jews. This is the world's immortal appeal to human pity; perhaps the more immortal it is because it was wasted on heartless men.²⁴ But this spectacle was also an attempt at compromise on the part of Pilate. The cruelty was, in the last analysis, his own work; and for it he seems to have been honestly suffering. In a very dramatic way, he was here calling attention to the great concession, which, even at his own expense, he had made to the Jews. His hope was that they would be satisfied.

But they were not. The sight of Jesus, thus mocked and abused, maddened His enemies more than ever. With blood-thirsty zeal they cried out, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!"

3. Pilate's Refusal to Condemn Jesus Pilate saw that no appeal of reason, or justice, or pity, could restrain the vicious spirit of that angry, impatient, and unhuman mob. He therefore issued what he intended to be his own final word of refusal to pass a death sentence upon this innocent Prisoner. "Take Him your-

²⁴"Behold the Man!" Early in the ministry of Jesus John the Baptist had said, "Behold the Lamb of God!" The two sayings touch the heart of God's plan of life. Between them lies the hope and the tragedy of God's once chosen people.

selves," said Pilate, "and crucify Him: for I find no crime in Him."²⁵

This refusal is significant in its bearing upon the degree to which the Personality of Jesus Christ had impressed the pagan Governor. Pilate saw, doubtless with alarm, the rising passions of the mob before him. He knew well the personal and political dangers involved in that ungoverned situation. Yet he refused to pronounce the death sentence which that mob demanded. Instead of doing that, he kept his notable Prisoner within his own possession, and tried yet again to rescue Him from the fury of that mob.

4. *Pilate's Fourth Effort to Save Jesus: Reactions of Religious Fear.* Pilate had thought that, when he refused to pass a sentence upon Jesus, his words would be final. But

**Fourth Effort to
Save Jesus
John 19:7-12a**

they were not. Pilate had yet to face a situation which stirred within him the deepest religious fears of which his superstitious and cowardly nature was capable. Thus far in the Trial, Pilate had considered Jesus merely as an innocent *Man*. But this new situation in the Trial had now raised a new question as to the nature of Jesus, which caused Pilate to fear, and to add another powerful effort to liberate this uncommon Prisoner. The new question which struck terror to Pilate was the thought, which to him at once seemed highly probable, that this marvellous Man was, in fact, not a Man, but a *God*.

For this startling suggestion to Pilate, the Jews themselves were immediately responsible. They thrust the question upon him, and

**1. Jews' Unavailing
Claim for Their
Law
John 19:7**

stirred up this fear in his heart, when they quoted their own Law, under which they intended, as their last resort in the form of legal procedure, to press their original and basic charge of blasphemy against the Son of

God.

Pilate knew no law of Rome that would condemn this innocent and just Man, and had so stated in his refusal to give a judgment against Jesus. But the Jews, as they erroneously thought, did have such a law; and for the enlightenment of Pilate on this sub-

²⁵This was the eighth time that Pilate pronounced Jesus innocent. He did so again, at least in his own mind, when he made his last effort to release Jesus after the final examination of the Lord respecting His Divinity (John 19:12). The Leaders of the Jews saw the significance of Pilate's refusal to give judgment at this time. They knew that, without a Roman judgment, they could not legally put Jesus to death. Had they done what Pilate here suggested, they would have incriminated themselves and their nation before the laws of Rome. This they knew full well; and hence the effect of Pilate's refusal, and his suggestion in arousing the Jews to their last great determined efforts to attain their purposes at the court of Pilate.

ject, they brought forward that law in these words: "We have a law, and by that law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God."²⁶ Pilate ignored this law which the Jews had suggested, but not the question that was raised in his own mind by the charge here made against Jesus.

This suggestion that Jesus had claimed to be the Son of God struck terror to Pilate's soul. Already his religious fear had

2. Pilate's Reactions to the Thought of Christ's Divinity

been touched by the message from his wife, who probably had some personal knowledge of Jesus, and from whom Pilate had doubtless learned previously many things which he would now remember as in full harmony with this suggestion made by the Jews. Already, from his own personal experiences with Jesus in this Trial, Pilate had stood in awe of the Son of God, and actually feared him, as John has here suggested. *Could it be true that Jesus was a God, or the Son of God?* That question was one that should make even a Roman judge pause, as Pilate thought within himself, and with evident alarm in his soul. It was a question to be further investigated, and with care, lest something dreadful should be done.²⁷

Pilate, thus panic stricken with fear, undertook an examination of Jesus concerning His divine origin and character. After

(1) Pilate's Examination of Jesus as to His Divine Nature John 19:8-11

entering again into the Palace where Jesus was, Pilate asked him, saying, "Whence art Thou?" To this question, Jesus made no reply. This was another of those sovereign silences, too deep for explanation, which mark the self-surrender of Jesus, step by step, on

His way to the Cross.

This silence, however, greatly irritated Pilate. Forgetting for

²⁶Compare *Leviticus* 24:15-16.

²⁷The Greeks and the Romans, in their own way were familiar with the idea of the "sons of the gods." They thought of their pagan deities anthropomorphically, and supposed that the gods, in human form, did actually take part in human affairs, as in the helping of a hard-pressed warrior on the field of battle. Furthermore, the pagan mind also thought of literal copulation between the gods and members of the human race. On this theory, in pagan thought, a man of extraordinary ability or achievement was accounted for: he was a "son of a god." In process of time, such characters were sometimes deified, and regarded as sacred. This idea was inseparable from Greek and Roman life and religion. And it was this idea that Pilate now used to interpret the Lord Jesus. Pilate had, from the first of the Trial, stood in awe of Jesus. By these words of the Jews, Pilate was suddenly made to think of Jesus as divine, a "Son of God." Pilate thought, of course, in the pagan sense; but that did not lessen the effect: for at this suggestion all the superstition and religious fear in Pilate, intensified by the brutal treatment to which he had only a moment before subjected the Lord Jesus, rose to terrify Pilate's pagan soul. There was also an irony of fate in his "Behold, the Man!" He had commanded the people to look at the *Man*, and so be moved to desist from their injustice and cruelty. But Pilate looked himself, and, behold, *a God!* and his own soul, for a time, was paralyzed with fear. The situation is highly dramatic, even in that degree in which things of the spirit alone can be dramatic.

a moment his fear, in his official arrogance and boastful anger, he tried to lord it over the Sovereign Son of God. "Speakest Thou not unto me!" he vociferated in his rage. "Knowest Thou not that I have power to release Thee, and have power to crucify Thee?"

In this angry utterance Pilate's vacillating character reached the acme of its expression. A moment ago, he was trembling before the Son of God: now he expected the Son of God to tremble before his own arrogant Roman power! But Pilate was here at error in point of fact and truth; and Jesus, here as always, was ready to make correction. Pilate had no such power as he here so arrogantly assumed over Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The Lord Jesus was here only surrendering Himself to the will of men; and He told Pilate so in terms that re-awakened the terror of his soul. "Thou wouldst have no power against Me," said Jesus, "except it were given thee from above." That was the truth which Pilate, and all the world, must understand.

These were words of judgment. Yet Jesus added to them an after-thought of mercy. "Therefore," said Jesus to Pilate, "he that delivered Me unto thee hath the greater sin." In those words, Jesus said, in effect, that He fully appreciated the situation then before Him. It was true, that Pilate was gradually yielding up Jesus to death. In so doing, Pilate was committing an unspeakable sin. Yet Jesus knew the thought of Pilate, and the entanglements of destiny which were forcing Pilate, against his better judgment, to do this thing. Jesus knew that the ultimate responsibility lay, beyond Pilate, in the evil hearts of the rulers of the Jews. Without condoning Pilate's own sin in the least, Jesus yet showed a touch of divine sympathy when He pointed out to the Roman Governor the "greater sin" of those who had originated and prosecuted this case before his Roman Court.

There is also another truth to be remembered in this connection. Throughout the Trial, Pilate consistently maintained the innocence of Jesus. This fact, as felt even then in the heart of Jesus, and as standing for all time in testimony of Him, has been, in itself, a vindication of the Lord Jesus from the "shame" of that Cross whereon He died, the Just for the unjust. There was therefore a probable touch of divine appreciation in the discrimination which the Lord Jesus here made between His accusers among the Jews and Pilate, the

(2) Christ's Kindly
Judgment of Pilate
John 19:11b

Reducing the Shame
of the Cross
Cf. Heb. 6:10a,
and 12:2-3

Roman judge. There was here a just judgment from the Supreme Judge of all the earth. But there was also, in these last words of Jesus to His earthly judge, a kindly appeal to the conscience of the re-awakened Roman Governor.

Pilate, as a result of this private conference with Jesus, again "sought to release Him." John has suggested that it was this last kindly word of Jesus which especially stimulated Pilate's effort at this time. What Pilate actually did in this effort to release Jesus must remain a matter of conjecture, since the records are silent on this point. One may easily imagine the Governor holding a long and earnest conference with the rulers of the Jews. Whatever his method of making this effort, it must have been full of force: for the fear of his actually granting the release caused the Jews to bring forth their last and most effective argument against Pilate.

5. *Pilate's Final Surrender of Jesus: Reactions to Political Fear.* The Jews knew that Pilate was fickle in mind as well as

**Final Surrender of
Jesus by Pilate
John 19:12b-16**

in action, and that he could easily be led away from his religious thoughts and fears. The Jews knew also that his mind must be turned into other lines of thinking, else their case was lost. They knew, further, the exact topic on which Pilate was most susceptible of being worked in their favor. They had therefore held in reserve until this time the one effective argument which, as they knew, would compel some degree of favor for them from the Roman Governor.

The last effective argument was an appeal to political fear on the part of Pilate. The Jews threatened to charge him with treason at the Court of Rome, where his record was not good, and where he had powerful political enemies whom he had reason to fear.

**1. Pilate Threatened
With a Charge
of Treason**

The rulers of the Jews, probably knowing the aggravating circumstances of Pilate's political position, threatened him with these words: "If thou release this Man, thou art not Caesar's friend: every one that maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar." Pilate, being, in the last analysis, a man who would feel the judgments of men to be closer than the judgments of God, succumbed to the fear of this charge, and went about the delivering of Jesus into the hands of His enemies.

Pilate was very deliberate and formal in his final response to the Jews. He was so because he had something very definite to accomplish thereby. He arranged his Court scene carefully. He brought Jesus forth from the Palace. Pilate himself sat down on

the Judgment Seat, at the place called the Pavement.²⁸ The time was an early hour in the morning: for the Trial, in its several stages, was hurried forward as fast as possible. Pilate's formal response, when finally given, had three parts, and three points which he wished to attain before he surrendered Jesus into the hands of the clamoring Jews.

**2. Pilate's Final
Response to the
Jews
John 19:13-16**

First, Pilate had at last decided to surrender Jesus to the Jews. But the Procurator was much concerned to impress the Jews both with the source and the magnitude of this favor which he was granting to them. Moreover, from his manner of handling the

**(1) Pilate's Favor
to the Jews**

case, it seems that Pilate desired the Jews to understand also that this murdering of Jesus was an affair of theirs, and not his. He gave up Jesus into their hands: but never, as it seems from the records, did Pilate consent that Jesus was worthy of death, and never did he pass the death sentence upon Jesus. These facts Pilate, seemingly, desired to have thoroughly understood.

Again, Pilate had personal and political ends to be served in the manner in which he granted this favor. He presented the thorn-crowned and bleeding, but sublime Sufferer to the gaze of all the people. Then Pilate thrust a maddening taunt at the heads of the rulers of the Jews, saying to them, "Behold, your King!" Literally, he said, "Behold, the King of you!" This taunt the mad-

**(2) Pilate's
Compelling the
Jews to Pronounce
the Final Sentence
Upon Jesus**

dened Jews resented, as Pilate had intended that they should. They therefore, doubtless led by the chief priests and scribes, shouted, "Away with Him! Away with Him! Crucify Him!" Thus Pilate compelled the Jews themselves to pronounce the final death sentence. His purpose in so doing was to protect himself, in some measure at least, both from political and from religious fears.

Finally, Pilate determined, as the price of his favor to those clamoring rulers of the Jews, that they should re-affirm their allegiance to the Roman Government. He brought this about by protesting against the death sentence which the Jews had pronounced upon Jesus. Pilate said, "Shall I crucify your King?" To this question, as Pilate

**(3) Pilate's
Compelling
Renewed Allegiance
to Rome**

²⁸This Pavement was probably an open-air place of meeting, and of holding court. It was probably built by the Romans, as the name "Pavement" signifies the tessellated, or mosaic work in which the Romans had taken delight since the days of Sulla. The exact location of this Pavement cannot now be definitely determined; but it was probably an elevated platform, overlooking the temple-courts, or joining the Temple with the Castle of Antonia.

well knew, there was but one answer at that time. Loudly, therefore, the chief priests proclaimed, as they had to proclaim, "We have no king but Caesar!"

The unthinkable proclamation of all history! By choosing Barabbas, as they had previously done, the Jews had closed their eyes to the moral excellence for which they as a people had been chosen of God. By choosing Caesar, as they here did, instead of Christ, they closed their hearts against the Messianic Hope of Israel. Having thus succeeded in their plans to murder Him for Whom their Nation had existed under God, it was symbolically fitting indeed that the high officials of that Nation should, at this very moment, thus sell out their national honor to a pagan Government, and bow in servile allegiance to a pagan king. That was a fateful renunciation. It reached beyond Christ, to His Kingdom. It thus separated from the favor of God His once Chosen People, upon whom, since that hour, still rests the irony of fate.

By this manner of rendering his final response to the Jews, Pilate accomplished several things. He compelled an unreserved expression of allegiance to the Roman Government on the part of the rebellious Jews and their anti-imperial leaders, who hated that Government. In so doing, he erected about himself a new official defence, which would tend to give him larger favor at the Imperial Court in Rome. He also had a full personal revenge upon the haughty rulers of the Jews. They had compelled him to do what he did not want to do; what his own better judgment strongly condemned; what he knew was wrong. In thus weakening before their hectoring power, Pilate fixed his ignominious doom in the history of men. But he did not bow before the threatening high priests, scribes, and elders of the people, until he had first made them bow servilely before him and to the Government which he represented, and which they hated above everything else in the world, except Jesus of Nazareth.

Having fully accomplished his purposes with those haughty and despised rulers, Pilate at length "delivered (Jesus) unto them to be crucified." That was all that they wanted, merely the permission of the Roman Government to murder this Jesus who was called the Christ. For that alone they had come to the Roman Court; and with even this weak negative judgment of Pilate, they were satisfied.

The enemies of Jesus lost little time in the carrying out of their fell purpose against the Lord Jesus. However, they did pause a moment to gloat over their hard won victory, and to mock Him there in the open court. They also took time to exchange

the purple robe, putting on Him again His own garments. Little did they then suppose, in their evil exultation, that this insignificant incident of changing His garments was a divinely ordered detail which showed then that they were in the fearful hands of God, and paved the way for a later fulfillment of prophecy that would support the truth of Him Whom they were now ready to destroy. Having thus revealed for all time the ironic hand of destiny which held them fast, "they led Him away to crucify Him."

CHAPTER XXIII

THE CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST

"Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate." *Hebrews 13:12.*

"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. *1. Peter 3:18.*

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." *John 12:32.*

"I lay down My Life for the sheep." *John 10:15.*

"And they led Him out to crucify Him." This chapter deals with the execution of that murderous purpose on the part of Christ's enemies. They supposed, after Pilate had delivered Jesus into their hands, that they had Him completely within their power. But that was far from being true; as the events considered in this chapter and the next following will clearly show.

A careful effort will be made, in these studies of the Cross, to consider all events accurately from the standpoint of their relation to Christ Himself: for He is always the sublime Center of interest, both human and divine. The course of events, from the Trial of Jesus to His Burial, comprises several well-defined units of action. This series of central events, marked as so many "stages," will be carefully separated one from another in the following outline.

I. The First Stage: The Way to the Cross

The first stage of these events is marked off as the *Via Dolorosa*, or the melancholy way from the Court of Pilate to Golgotha, where Jesus was crucified. The first interests of this stage are circumstantial. But the real narrative interests even of this first stage center in the human and the divine aspects of Christ's own nature, when He comes Himself into action on the way to the Cross.

Records of the
Journey
Matthew 27:31-33
Mark 15:20-22
Luke 23:26-33
John 19:16-17

1. *The Questions of Time and Place of the Crucifixion.* The procession to the Cross began from the Praetorium, where Pilate had held his court. But two questions arise. When did they go? Where was the place of the Crucifixion? These two questions of Time and Place have been discussed, because of certain minor

difficulties, almost since the day on which this memorable journey was made. Conclusions still differ to some extent. In the following statements, an effort is made to give the probable facts, without giving the intricate arguments on either side of the points about which there is still some question and debate.

The Crucifixion proper began at the "third hour," as the Hebrews counted time. This fact is agreed to by Matthew, Mark, and Luke. This would mean nine o'clock in the forenoon, in modern time, which was the time of the morning sacrifice among the Jews.¹ By twelve o'clock (noon), the act of crucifying had been completed long enough, as the sequel here will show, for several important events to take place around the Cross.

At twelve o'clock Jesus was still alive.

Then there was the darkness which covered the land. The duration of this darkness was from the sixth hour until the ninth: that is, from 12 noon until 3 p. m. Jesus died at 3 p. m., which hour was the regular time for slaying the Paschal Lamb. The "evening," as counted by the Jews, lasted from 3 p. m. until 6 p. m. At sunset, or 6 p. m., began the next new day, which in this case was the Jewish Sabbath, or the modern Saturday. Jesus was crucified on Friday, as time is now counted, the crucifixion beginning at about nine o'clock in the morning, and His death coming about three in the afternoon.

According to this reckoning, the final decision of Pilate must have been made at an early hour in the morning, probably about eight o'clock. Since the distance to Golgotha is estimated to have been about one-third of a mile, and since there seems to have been only two interruptions on the way, the procession probably required not more than one hour to reach the place, after leaving the court of Pilate. The Crucifixion therefore could easily have begun about nine o'clock. How long it took to complete the act of crucifying the Lord Jesus and the two others crucified with Him cannot now be determined.

¹The Jewish day, as then counted, would translate into modern time as follows: the third hour was 9 a.m.; the sixth hour was 12 noon; the ninth hour was 3 p.m. Frequently these "hours" were used to designate the whole intervening period, as from 9 to 12, which was commonly understood to be the "sixth hour." This manner of counting the time would provide for an agreement also in John's statement (19:14), in which he places the final decision of Pilate at "about the sixth hour," or as it may be read, "going toward the sixth hour." This agreement is based upon the assumption that John used the Asiatic method of counting time. But it must be remembered that John wrote a generation after the other three Gospel Writers, and that he wrote in far away Ephesus, under a different civilization, and that he may have used a different system of chronology then in vogue among the people for whom he wrote. The whole question turns upon the apparent difference between John's time-count and that of the other three Gospel Writers.

The place of the Crucifixion was called Golgotha, or The Place of a Skull. This place was somewhere outside of the City gate, as the City walls then were. The place was in a garden, near the City, and on the side of one of the well-travelled roads leading from the City. These facts are given in the Gospel narratives, and represent about all that is definitely known concerning the place of the Crucifixion.

2. Place of the Crucifixion of Christ

Matt. 27:33, 39,—
Mark 15:22, 29,—
Luke 23:33, 35,—
John 19:17, 20, 41
Heb. 13:12 — —

The location of Golgotha is a matter of long and unsettled controversy. The word *Golgotha* is Aramaic, and means *skull*. This word is the same in meaning as the Greek word *kranion*, which was translated into the Latin *Vulgate* by the word *Calvaria*. Hence there are three common names for this unknown place,—*Golgotha*, *The Skull* (or, *The Place of a Skull*), and *Calvary*. The significance of this name is uncertain, as is also the location of the place signified. Early tradition places it at a skull-shaped knoll within the present city wall. It is more likely, however, that the name signified an open spot of bare ground, as many modern scholars hold, outside the city limits, in a very public place, as the Scriptures emphasize, probably on the Damascus road, or that leading toward Joppa, on the north or west of the modern city.

2. The World-Wide Representative Character of the Procession to the Cross. The procession that left the Court of Pilate on the morning of that eventful day was representative of the entire contemporary Mediterranean World. This fact is confirmed by the use of the three languages, later in the day, when Pilate wrote the Superscription which he placed on the Cross of Christ.² The make-up of the procession is

Records of Procession

Matthew 27:32
Mark 15:21-22
Luke 23:26-32
John 19:16-17

best analyzed when it is looked at as being composed of four principal groups.

The first of these groups was the prisoners who were being led away to be executed. There were three of these, among whom Christ was the Person of central interest. The other two prisoners were malefactors, commonly called *thieves*, but perhaps more correctly called *robbers*. Jesus was clothed in His own outer garment, and possibly still had the crown of thorns

²Compare the fact that fifteen or more nationalities were present in Jerusalem at the Feast of Pentecost, which occurred fifty days after the Passover. (*Acts* 2:9-11). That was a lesser feast; and it is highly probable that even more nationalities were present at this time, at the great annual Feast of the Passover.

on His head. He was also bruised, bleeding, and weakened, from the scourging which He had received at the hands of the Roman

1. Prisoners: Christ and the Two Thieves

Matt. 27:32 —

Mark 15:21, 22

Luke 23:26, 32

John 19:16, 17

soldiers. Since such was the custom with notable prisoners, Jesus may have worn also, suspended from His neck, the placard bearing the superscription of His "crime," which Pilate later placed on the Cross. But this point is not at all certain, and possibly was not the case. Until the procession reached

the City gate, Jesus carried His own Cross.³

But at the gate of the City a change was made in this part of the plan. Apparently, at this point, the physical strength of Jesus failed for the time; and the impatient soldiers laid the Cross of Jesus upon another person whom they impressed for that purpose. This new bearer of the Lord's Cross was Simon, of Cyrene,⁴ of whom Mark has this to say: "And they compelled one passing by, Simon of Cyrene, coming from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to go with them, that he might bear His Cross." Luke suggests that Jesus walked on before, and that Simon followed, bearing the Cross. It is quite possible that the two sons, Alexander and Rufus, assisted their father with his burden in the sad procession. The Two Robbers, each bearing his own cross, are supposed to have followed immediately after Simon, as the procession moved on toward the place of crucifixion.

This procession was under the conduct of the Roman soldiers, who are the second group to be considered. Foremost among these, riding on horseback, was the Centurion, who led the pro-

³The Cross of Christ was a heavy, roughly constructed wooden cross. It was made after the form of the ordinary Roman cross, the *Crux Immissa*, having an upright beam, with the cross-beam arranged in this fashion †. The St. Andrew's cross, or *Crux Decussata*, made in this form X, and the St. Anthony's cross, or *Crux Commissa*, were also used for crucifixion. The common Roman cross was low; but tradition claims that the Cross of Christ was fifteen feet high, with cross-arms of eight feet in length. A proper height in the upright beam there was placed a wooden peg (*sedile*), on which the feet of the victim rested to help support his body when it was nailed to the cross through his hands and his feet. Christ is supposed to have carried His Cross in such manner that the upper part rested upon His shoulders, while the lower part trailed on the ground.

⁴This Simon who carried the Cross of Jesus was a native of Cyrene, an important city in North Africa, having a large Jewish colony, who maintained their own synagogue at Jerusalem. (*Acts* 6:9). Simon was probably a Passover pilgrim, who was lodging in some village near the City. Since Simon was a Hellenistic Jew, the soldiers doubtless thought that he would be less likely to protest against this degrading service, than would a Jew of Palestine. It is also possible that Simon may have shown some signs of sympathy for Jesus, or even made motions toward helping Him, at this moment of His exhaustion.

There is a strong probability that Simon became a believer in Christ, if he was not indeed already a disciple at this time. Both of his sons, Alexander and Rufus, were mentioned by Mark as well known Christians in the Early Church; although at the time of Mark's writing (68 A.D.), both Simon and Alexander may have been dead. Paul, writing ten years earlier to the Romans (16:13), mentioned Rufus and his mother in the most kindly terms. Tradition says that Alexander suffered martyrdom. Rufus was given favorable mention by Polycarp (c69-155 A.D.), the Bishop of Smyrna, as he has been called, in his *Epistle to the Philippians* (about the year 112 A.D.). There is also a tradition that Rufus himself was an early Bishop of Spain.

cession. He was called the *Exactor Mortis*, and a part of his official duty was to proclaim the cause of the prisoners' deaths.

Next after this officer came Jesus, followed by Simon of Cyrene, carrying the Lord's Cross, as previously described, and then the two malefactors.⁵ Behind the prisoners, and

2. Roman Officers, and Jewish Enemies of Christ

having charge of them, were the Roman soldiers, who were charged also with the execution. They were rough in speech and manner, quarrelsome, and impatient of the slow-moving procession. And close behind the soldiers, came the rulers of the Jews, gloating over their recent victory and their prospective Victim. Among them were the chief priests, the scribes, the elders of the people, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, possibly (though not likely) Caiaphas himself, and all others of the Jews who had desired the death of this Just Person. They were all present, as the events of the day revealed, to see the consummation of their victory in putting to death the Lord of Glory.

The next group, after the officers and the prisoners, was the large number of the disciples and the friends of Jesus who joined

3. Disciples and Friends of Jesus

the ever increasing multitude that followed Him to the place of the Crucifixion. These friends of the Lord were not in one large group to themselves, but were scattered in smaller groups, as accident and circumstances had thrown them together, here and there in the long procession. They may be considered, however, under two classes: the large number unknown by name, and those whose names are given, or else are an easy conjecture from the facts on record.

Luke has suggested that "there followed Him a great multitude of the people, and of women who bewailed and lamented Him."

(1) General Unnamed Followers of Christ

Matt. 27:— 55
Mark 15:— 40-41
Luke 23:27— 48-49
John 19:— 20

Probably most of them were disciples from the City, as it would appear from the Lord's address considered below; but some of them were the kind women of the City who served as a Red Cross Society in those days. These women were accustomed to come forth from the City on such occasions, with narcotics and pain-deadening anodynes, to sooth the criminal's last hours of suffering.

⁵These malefactors were not ordinary thieves and robbers, as some have supposed. They were brigands, or revolting Jews, who raised insurrection, as was common in those days, and then took advantage of the unsettled state of society and the misguided patriotic fervor of those unsettled times which they had themselves helped to create, to plunder the country, and to practice assassination upon such Roman officers and judges as were severe in judgment. These facts of the unsettled times make

Luke has further suggested that there were also many friends, acquaintances, possibly some relatives, and disciples, from Galilee, who had, in part at least, come with Him to Jerusalem and to the Feast. Doubtless there were also, in that nameless multitude, many disciples of Jesus, and many who sympathized with His teachings, who had come from Judea, and from Samaria, and from His fields of recent ministry in Perea beyond Jordan. The common people always heard Jesus gladly; and probably the majority of that multitude, in their secret hearts, were his friends even in this dark hour of His death.

First to be named, among those whose names are known as being present on that occasion, was Mary, the Lord's Mother.

<p>(2) Disciples and Friends Present, Known by Name Matt. 27:— — 55- 56, 61 Mark 15:— — 40- 41, 47 Luke 23:27-31, — 59, 55-56 John 19:— 25-27 —</p>	<p>She was probably supported on this sad journey by the Apostle John.⁶ Closely grouped with her, were the other women,⁷ mentioned here as having come from Galilee, in continuation of their personal ministry to Jesus.⁸ Among these were the following, known by name: Mary Magdalene, Mary, the wife of Clopas (Alphæus) and mother of James the Less and Joses, and Salome, the mother of James and John.</p>
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Besides these who are expressly named, there were others, named in the general account of the Death and Burial of Christ,

(3) Other Friends
Probably Present

who were probably present in that procession. Alexander and Rufus, sons of Simon, were probably there, and may have had their conversion from this event. There is little doubt that Nicodemus was there, though he may, for the time, have had his place quietly with the Sanhedrists, who would not associate even here with the friends of the Lord Jesus. The same may have been true of

Pilate's treatment of Jesus, Whom the Jews charged with treason and sedition, all the more remarkable. Ordinarily, a Roman judge would have made quick dispatch of such a case. These two malefactors, as some have conjectured, may have been companions of Barabbas in his crimes; and they were, according to their own confessions later in the day, guilty of the crimes for which they were going to their execution.

⁶John, through the entire course of events, remained as near to Jesus as the circumstances would allow. (*John* 19:25-27, 35-37). This latter passage suggests that John was present to the end of the Crucifixion, having returned to the Cross after taking the Lord's Mother to some place of safety. One naturally wonders whether, in that large concourse of people, any of the other Apostles were present, and whether the "young man Saul" (*Acts* 7:58; 8:1-3) did not, in fact, witness this scene.

⁷There are difficulties respecting this group of names. It is not certain how many women are here designated; nor is it clear how the several names are to be identified. See Chapter VI, Note 15; and *Luke* 8:1-3, with the discussion of these verses in Chapter XI, page 240.

⁸The part these women played in supporting the work of Christ was very great. From an early day in His ministry they were deeply consecrated to Him, and active in His Kingdom. They almost seem at times to have formed themselves into an organized band to help promote the work of Christ and of His Apostles.

Joseph also, the wealthy councilor of Arimathea. The presence of all of these in this procession is highly probable. And there were others, scores of others no doubt, who, as friends of the Lord, joined the Procession, or at least looked upon the Crucified Christ that day: men and women, whose names became familiar in the Early Christian Church, and whose loyal faith and services have been recorded for all time in the *Book of the Acts*.⁹

These already mentioned were the groups most directly concerned with the events of that great day. But many others were

**4. Common People,
and the Common
Rabble**

Matt. 27:— 39, 47

Mark 15:— 29,—

Luke 23:— 35, 48

John 19:20,——

present on that day. On the principle that a crowd attracts a crowd, vast multitudes, in fact, fell in with the moving procession, as the interest grew in volume and became more and more intense. Multitudes of the common people joined in the procession, from the City, and from all Palestine, and from

all the countries represented at this great annual Feast of the Passover. To all of these, who had some kind or degree of serious interest, must be added the great concourse of the common rabble, mainly from the City, who were always ready, with noisy response, to follow up every occasion that promised new excitements. In a representative way, the whole world thus followed the Lord of Glory to that place of the Cross, where He, as the Lamb of God, gave Himself in death to atone for the sin of all the world.

3. *The Two Main Events on the Way to the Place of the Crucifixion.* This vast and mixed procession moved on toward Golgotha, as previously described. But all of this description of the procession gives little more than the setting for the two main events that happened on the way to Golgotha. In both of these the Lord Himself was the central figure. Externally, the two events represent two pauses in the course of the procession. In the first of these, the Humanity of Jesus is emphasized, and in the other His Divinity.

The first pause was at the City gate. To that point, Jesus had borne His Cross himself.¹⁰ At that point, as it seems, His physical strength was exhausted. He sank beneath the burden of the Cross. The Lord Jesus was perfectly Human. From that point

⁹The mind loves to dwell on the following persons as possibly present on this memorable occasion: Joseph Barsabas, Matthias, Barnabas, John Mark, Luke, Gamaliel, Stephen, Philip, and the other deacons, Saul of Tarsus, the Ethiopian Treasurer, Ananias of Damascus, Dorcas, Cornelius of Casarea, Timothy, Silas, Jason of Thessalonica, Crispus of Corinth, Apollos, Acquilla and Priscilla, and many others mentioned in *The Acts* and the Epistles.

¹⁰That Jesus carried His Cross Himself to the City gate, is evident from a comparison of *John* 19:17 and *Matthew* 27:32.

in the journey, as previously described, it became necessary to impress Simon, the Cyrenian, to bear the Lord's Cross to the place of Crucifixion. The divine purpose in recording this incident was, as it seems, to summarize the sufferings of Jesus, past and present, in such a concrete manner as greatly to emphasize His Human Nature as He went to the place of Death.

The previous sufferings of Jesus had been great. The sources of His agony may be suggested; but the nature and the degree of His suffering are hid deep in the secret of his perfect Human and Divine Natures. He had gone without sleep that night, and without food in the morning. He had devoted the previous evening to long discourses with the Apostles; and the mid-night hours He had spent in the indescribable agony of the Garden. He had been bound as a criminal, and half dragged about from place to place, during the cruel, and shameful, and agonizing hours of the Jewish Trial. His body had been tortured, and wounded, and weakened from loss of blood; and His inner Spirit no doubt had been tortured even more by these cruelties. He had been inhumanly treated in the Roman courts. Last of all, He had staggered, in physical exhaustion, bearing His own Cross as far as to the City gate.

The results, as respects even His perfect Human Nature, were inevitable. There He paused under His burden, perhaps even sinking to the ground, as some have thought, and fainting in His weakness. Mark, through a change in the verb which he used, has suggested that the exhaustion of Jesus, for a little while at least, was complete. Describing the beginning of the journey to Golgotha, Mark (15:20) has stated that they "lead Him out." Speaking later of the incident at the City gate, Mark stated that they compelled Simon to carry the Cross. Then, using a different verb, Mark said that "they *bring* (as if they carried) Him unto the place Golgotha." All these facts of suffering, and the fact of Christ's exhaustion, whatever the degree of it, serve to emphasize, in an unforgettable manner, the Human side of His Nature, here standing in strong contrast with the Divine in Him which a moment later found an adequate expression.

Whatever the degree of His physical exhaustion, the Divine Nature of the Lord Jesus was nothing impaired. This fact was seen when, as He willed it so, the procession paused a second

**1. Christ's Physical
Strength Exhausted**
Matthew 27:32
Mark 15:21
Luke 23:26

**(1) Previous
Sufferings of Jesus**

**(2) Present Results
of Human
Weakness**

time. At that time the Lord's Divine Nature spoke with perfect freedom and authority. With divine clearness and foresight, He described the fearful doom which was even then overhanging the City of Jerusalem and the Nation of the Jews. The message which He spoke during this pause grew out of the last scenes of the Lord's Trial before Pilate.

2. Christ's Divine Nature Expressed in Prophecy
Luke 23:27-31

This melancholy message was addressed to a group of women, who doubtless were standing by while the procession was passing, ready to fall in with it on the way to Golgotha. The group was composed of sympathizers with Jesus, such women, in fact, as the Maries, and the ministering women from the City. Christ's addressing them as "Daughters of Jerusalem" was either a suggestion that most of them were from the City, or else it was a symbolical designation of them as representatives in whom and through whom He was speaking to their entire Race.

(1) Women Here Addressed by Jesus

His prophetic message to the women was spoken in these words: "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For behold, the days are coming, in which they shall say, 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the breasts that never gave suck.' Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us!' and to the hills, 'Cover us.' For if they do these things in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?"¹¹

Three things must be taken into account when one inquires into the meaning of this solemn pronouncement of the Son of God.

(2) Christ's Prophecy to the Women, and to Their Race

This was the only time in all of His ministry that Jesus Christ ever commanded Human eyes to weep. His words on this occasion pronounced, in fearful terms, the curse of *barrenness*, which was the traditional and solemn dread of every Hebrew woman. These words of judgment

¹¹In this last sentence, Christ re-inforced the future judgments which He had announced against the Jews, by comparing those judgments with the scenes which were then being enacted under Roman authority, to which the Jews, in the last scene of the Trial, had subscribed themselves and their Nation. Farrar has paraphrased the meaning of the Lord's statement in these words: "If they (the Romans) act thus to Me, the Innocent and the Holy, what shall be the fate of these (Jews), the guilty and false?"

Christ's initial words, "Weep not for Me," show His self-forgetfulness, which is here set in sharp contrast with His physical weakness. These words were also a courteous suggestion to the women that He was both able and willing to bear *alone* the burden of the world's sin. He could not, and would not, share that triumphant honor, even sympathetically, with any other. That was His covenanted duty and glory.

were the first words which Jesus had spoken since His last words to Pilate. These three facts combine to point out the dreadful meaning of these words of divine prophecy.

Pilate had arrogantly, and angrily, boasted of his supreme power over the Son of God. In His reply, the Lord then told Pilate that all of his assumed power was subject absolutely to the Will of God, to grant, and to restrain.¹² After that corrective statement to Pilate, only one other important thing happened during the last scene of the Trial. During those last sad moments, the Jews formally renounced God, and their Messianic Hope, and accepted Caesar as their sole King. They said, "We have no king but Caesar." That was their choice, formally and officially made.

The Son of God heard their words; and this prophecy to the women was the Lord's reply to that decision. Availing Himself of the first opportunity He had to speak, the Lord Jesus, with divine knowledge and authority, told the Jews in this prophecy that they would be given over, by the Will of God, to the power of Caesar, to persecute and to destroy; and that they should suffer under Caesar without the merciful restraints of God, Whom they had rejected, to check the avenging powers of Rome. That was, in part, the meaning of Christ's prophecy at this time.

But that is not all that His prophecy meant. The Jews had chosen Caesar in place of God. They had turned from the Kingdom of Heaven to the world power of Rome. They were murdering the Son of God. They had thus cut themselves and their posterity loose from God and His protection, and His goodness. Calamity therefore awaited them and their children. God's judgment was upon their Sacred City, and after that upon their whole race, which should be scattered throughout the world. Having severed themselves from God, they would be forsaken of Him. Thus delivered to a pagan power, and thus forsaken of Divine favor, it would be better, as Christ suggested to the women, even a literal physical sense, that the future of their race should never be born. That was the suggestive meaning of the blessedness of barrenness which He described in His prophecy. Their doom was self-imposed and self-defined; and it would remain in force until they recalled the decision which they had made in the presence of Pilate.¹³

¹²See the Index, under "Sovereign over the Situation."

¹³See *Romans*, chapters 9-11; and *2. Timothy* 2:10-14.

The words of this divine prophecy of the Lord Jesus had a still deeper spiritual meaning. The sufferings of the Jews, as previously suggested, were only the outward symbol of more awful spiritual consequences, to which Jesus clearly pointed in this prophecy. The Jews had formally renounced "the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom (He had) sent," and in Whom alone, through faith in Him, is there a hope of life everlasting.¹⁴ Those rulers of the Jews had formally and officially renounced God's *Way*, and *Truth*, and *Life*.

Those Jews were therefore lost spiritually. They had cut themselves off from God. Their rulers had officially sold the posterity of their Race under spiritual and eternal judgment. Except they return to God, in the way of His appointment, they were without hope. They must return to God Whom they had forsaken. They must accept and honor God's Son Whom they had rejected. Their only hope of returning to God was through repentance and faith. They must return; and repentance was their first step. They had a profound cause to weep profoundly. Immediately, there was nothing for them to do but to weep in the deepest agony of their souls. Their first duty before God was to weep. Their only hope for themselves was to weep. Christ therefore commanded them as a Nation and People to weep: to weep their bitterest tears of repentance, and of heart-sorrow for the fearfulness of their sin; for such sorrow alone, which would bring them again to the mercy of God in Jesus Christ, could undo their own undoing.¹⁵

II. The Second Stage: "Christ Our Passover Is Sacrificed for Us"

"And they bring Him unto the place Golgotha" . . . and they crucified Him"; shedding "the precious Blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot"; "a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world"; a "Lamb of God, Which taketh away the sin of the world." They "denied the Holy One and the Just," . . . and "crucified the Lord of Glory." "But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." "For He hath made

¹⁴See *John* 17:3; and 3:16, 35, 36; and 2. *Thessalonians* 1:7-9.

¹⁵Compare *Acts* 3:13-21, especially verse 19. It should be remembered always, that every fact which Christ foretold of the Jews in the physical world of visible history has literally come to pass. What then of the spiritual consequences suggested?

¹⁶For the Scripture in the title above, and those in this paragraph, see 1. *Corinthians* 5:7; *Romans* 5:6; *Mark* 15:22, 24; 1. *Peter* 1:19; *Revelation* 13:8; *John* 1:29;

Him, Who knew no sin, to be a Sin-Offering for us; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." "For even the Son of Man came . . . to give His Life a ransom for many." "And He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, Who is even at the right hand of God, Who also maketh intercession for us."

This second stage in the general events at the Death of Christ deals with the facts of the Crucifixion proper. This stage, or division of the general events, is very definite: for it covers exactly what happened in the act of crucifying the Lord Jesus,—the doings, mainly, of the soldiers, from their arrival at Golgotha, until they sat down to gamble over the Lord's garments. The happenings of this stage, as here viewed from the standpoint of Christ, acted upon and acting, fall into three main divisions of interest. These interests center in the facts of Christ crucified, Christ satisfied, and Christ making intercession for sinners.

1. Christ Crucified: An Offering for Sin. "Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own Blood, suffered without the gate." Even the place of "Jesus Christ, and Him Crucified" His death was in keeping with an ancient law, which was still observed at this time." *Matthew 27:35-36* This Supreme Sacrifice of all history began, *Mark 15:24* when the procession reached Golgotha, soon *Luke 23:33* after nine o'clock, which was the time of the *John 19:17-18* morning sacrifice among the Jews. Jesus was put to death by crucifixion, presumably according to the common methods of such form of execution among the Romans at that time.

Crucifixion was a horrible form of execution. The common method of crucifixion among the Romans has been described by another in these words: "The victim of this punishment was stripped, laid on the central bar, and the arms attached by ropes to the transverse beam, the hands and the feet fastened with huge iron nails to the wood. A *sedile* was arranged to bear a portion of the weight of the body, which would never have been sustained by the gaping wounds. The cross was then

Acts 3:14; 1. Corinthians 2:8; Romans 5:8; 2. Corinthians 5:21; Mark 10:45; 1. John 2:2; and Romans 8:33-34.
¹⁷*Hebrews 13:12.* The law required that all executions be outside of the city walls. *Numbers 15:35-36; Acts 7:58.* For the marginal quotation, see *1. Corinthians 2:2.*

raised by the executioners, and thrust with a fierce jerk into the hole or socket prepared for it. There was nothing in this inhuman torture necessarily to occasion death. The sufferers often lingered for twelve hours, and sometimes for several days, dying at last of thirst, starvation, and utterly intolerable agony." The Romans generally left the bodies to be devoured by birds of prey; the Jews buried the corpses. Constantine I. (Emperor 312-337 A.D.), after his conversion, out of reverence for the Lord whom he had chosen, abolished the punishment, which, far more terrible than one by wild beasts or fire, has never been renewed, and rarely practised in Europe since that day."

Such was the common method of crucifixion; and such, in all probability, was the manner of Christ's own death. But the Gospel Writers were careful to avoid a record

2. **Simplicity of the Gospel Statement of Christ's Crucifixion** of horrible details. The Bible is, in fact, a remarkably chaste book. It suggests the horrors of sin, in order that men may escape its fearful consequences, both here and hereafter. But the Bible never deals with the details of horror, except for moral and spiritual purposes. The Gospel Records have given a simple statement of the facts concerning the death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The sacred historians have stated that Christ was crucified; and that the soldiers, as required by Roman law, sat down to watch the Cross on which He expired. In this double entry, there was a record of the Fact, and also of the providentially provided official proof of that Fact, and of its issue in death. That was sufficient record for all time. The Gospel Writers had no need then to describe to their readers the horrors of crucifixion; for they were familiar to all in those days. The Cross of Christ is now glorified as the symbol of victory and power. It is now the magnetic center of saving grace. The grateful world now thinks of the atonement made on the Cross; for Christ "bare our sins in His own Body on the tree"; and "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself."¹⁸

2. *Christ Satisfied with the Travail of His Soul.* Christ was crucified by Roman soldiers, who were, in fact, little more than

¹⁸The agonies suffered by one crucified have been described thus: "The fever which soon set in produced a burning thirst. The increasing inflammation of the wounds in the back, hands, and feet; the congestion of the blood in the head, lungs, and heart; the swelling of every vein, an indescribable oppression, racking pains in the head; the stiffness of the limbs, caused by the unnatural position of the body;—these all united to make the punishment, in the language of Cicero, *crudelissimum terribilissimumque supplicium*." Jesus foresaw, from the beginning that such would be His own death. There is no wonder that even He felt the spirit willing, but the flesh weak, when He looked upon the terrible death on the Cross.

¹⁹See 1. *Peter* 2:24; and 2. *Corinthians* 5:19.

executive agents of Jewish malice. But how did Christ Himself regard this transaction? The several events which accompanied His Crucifixion seem to answer that question. In some of these events He participated. Some of them He merely witnessed. All of them together seem to show that the Lord Jesus must have had a sovereign satisfaction in the present and prospective travail of His own Soul.

The four events that took place as a part of the Crucifixion of Christ are best interpreted from the standpoint of their relation to His own inner Spirit. These accompanying events were, in that otherwise melancholy hour, as providential supports to the Mind and the Spirit of the Son of God, Who, in His Human Nature, was dying the shameful death of the Cross in order that He might save the world from sin and death. These four events brought to Him a satisfaction which could come only to the Son of God, in an hour like that of His Crucifixion.

The first source of satisfaction to the Lord Jesus was the incident of the proffered *vinegar*, or *wine*. This called forth His own conscious strength and courage to decline an offer of human pity. This incident, which in itself seems trivial, has, for two reasons, a profound significance touching the nature and mission of Christ himself.

**1. Courage to
Decline Human Pity**
Matthew 27:34
Mark 15:23

The facts of the proffered kindness were these. "They gave Him *wine* to drink mingled with gall: and when He had tasted it, He would not drink." This drink was a wine of a sharp acrid taste, and hence it was also called vinegar. The *gall* was a bitter infusion which added a narcotic quality to the mixture.²⁰ It was commonly given to criminals before crucifixion, to stupefy their senses, and so to deaden their feeling of pain. When Jesus received this mixture that was offered to Him, He touched it to His lips, in courteous recognition of the spirit of kindness in those who gave it; but, knowing what it was, He declined to drink it.

**(1) Facts of the
Proffered Kindness**

**(2) Treading the
Wine-Press of
Wrath Alone**

The fact that this drink was offered to Christ was a fulfillment of an ancient prophecy.²¹ He knew this prophecy, and saw its fulfillment. The incident therefore gave Him support in this vivid reminder of His own relations

²⁰This drink was probably brought to Golgotha by the benevolent women who were present on all such occasions. The mixture was prepared by women in the City, as a result, it is said, of a gloss on *Proverbs* 31:6-7. The drink was probably offered to Jesus about the time that He was exalted on the Cross.

²¹See *Psalms* 69:17-21.

with the ancient covenants and eternal purposes of God. The Son of God saw the program of His own Father's mercy, which included His own suffering, being carried out with the assurance of smallest details.

Christ's response to the situation was immediate. Since He was the Son of God, it could not be otherwise. He refused to drink the mixture. His decision was definite and final. This refusal meant, first, that He would carry His program of suffering alone, without even the mitigating sympathy of human kindness. It meant, further, that He would bear the full weight of the burden of sin. He would drink the full cup of woe. He would not mitigate the suffering by having His mind darkened and His senses stupefied with narcotics. With senses unimpaired, and with sovereign self-possession to the end, He would meet alone this obligation of His Saviorship, to "save His people from their sins."²²

This decision was another gratifying victory to the Son of God of His courage to stand by His full mission, appointed to Him from of old.²³ It was a self-assertion of His conscious Divinity, which, of course, was always self-consistent and self-sufficient. It was another evidence that He had within Himself the power, unaided and unforcible, to lay down His own life, and to take it again. It was an expression of that divine sovereignty which, even in His agony, He exercised to the end over the details of His own Crucifixion.

The second circumstance of the Crucifixion that must have profoundly touched, and upon reflection profoundly gratified, the mind and the heart of Jesus was the fact that He was being crucified between two malefactors. John, in His record of this fact, has emphasized that Jesus was set "in the midst" between them; and tradition has strongly insisted that Jesus was exalted on His Cross above the other two who were then crucified.

²²Three times drink was offered to Jesus during the Crucifixion. (1) The stupefying sour wine, or vinegar, described above, which was offered at first to deaden His pain. This He refused to drink. (*Matthew 27:34*). (2) Later the soldiers "mocked Him, coming to Him, (and) offering Him vinegar." They probably snatched it away, thus trying to aggravate His agony of thirst. (*Luke 23:36*). (3) Finally, when the deepest agony was past, Jesus, possibly with a definite purpose in mind, as will be noticed later, requested drink; and some kindly hand touched His parched lips with a sponge full of vinegar, from the vessel that was near by. This Jesus drank; for it was not the stupefying mixture. (*John 19:28-30*).

²³Compare His previous experiences: the Temptation, above in Chapter III; His agonizing prayer at the prospect of death, *John 12:27-28*; and His agony in the Garden, in Chapter XX.

There was an obvious purpose of malice, on the part of the Lord's enemies, in this arrangement of His death. It is almost

(1) Purpose of Malice in This Arrangement of the Cross

certain that this plan was suggested by the chief priests and the scribes. They desired in this way to have it appear that Jesus was the leader of those common criminals between whom He was being crucified. It is possible that these enemies of the Lord had arranged this plan with Pilate himself; and that he then, knowing what they would do, had prepared and erected the superscription, designating Christ as "The King of the Jews." Pilate would have regarded such a counter-stroke as an excellent means of retaliation; for he would thus turn to their own shame the purposes of these Jewish leaders whom he thoroughly hated.

This arrangement of the crosses, malicious as must have been its intention, was a source of satisfaction and support to the mind

(2) Satisfaction Therein to the Mind of Christ

and spirit of Christ Himself. Of course He felt the additional shame that was in this way attached to His Cross. But that feeling was readily offset by the knowledge that this shame itself was the fulfilling of an ancient prophecy: for, seven centuries before this event, God had said that the Messiah should be "numbered with the transgressors."²⁴ Thus again Christ was made conscious of the intimate relations between this dark hour of His own suffering and the program of His Father's mercy.

The Son of God was thus reminded of His Divinity, as seen from the past, with its intimate covenant relations with His Father. But that was not all that the arrangement of the crosses must have meant to Him. The symbolism of that situation was also highly suggestive of His sovereign exaltation. He was there on the Cross. On either hand were the two guilty sinners. One of them was saved by divine grace. The other one was lost. Christ was exalted between them, as the Savior of the one, and the ultimate Judge of the other. The arrangement itself was, as it would seem, a providential symbol of His own place in the final judgment of the world.²⁵

Thus the wrath of men was made to praise the Lord. In the symbolism of that dark hour the malice of the Lord's enemies

²⁴*Isaiah* 53:12.

²⁵This symbolism, as here suggested, in the arrangement of the three crosses may be compared with Christ's own description of the Final Judgment, when He shall come in glory, and shall separate all the world for purposes of judgment, and shall sit enthroned between the saved and the lost. *Matthew* 25:31-46.

had exalted Him, "in the midst," between the representatives of a saved and a lost world. They had also suggested His sovereign crown, and His throne of universal judgment. They had given to Him, even in that hour, a vivid and satisfying consciousness of His commission as Savior: a commission which over-arched that dark hour, like a bow of assurance in the sky, having one end resting on the beginning, and the other on the end, of Time itself.

The malice of the Jews was, in this way, made to support the Son of God, even in their efforts to add to His shame. In like

**3. Reminded of His
Universal
Saviorship**
Matthew 27:35
Mark 15:24
Luke 23:34

manner, the vices of the Gentiles were subjected to the providential will of God for the same purpose. The Roman soldiers, after they crucified Jesus, sat down at the foot of His Cross, and gambled for His garments. In so doing, these Gentile sinners fulfilled a unique prophecy, which had a far-reaching power of suggestion for the Lord Jesus Christ in that hour of His death.

Those soldiers were Roman. They represented the wide world beyond Palestine. They were of the heathen world, Gentiles and not Jews. Yet these soldiers, through their pagan vices, were performing even an incidental detail which the foreknowledge of God had assigned to them on the program of this occasion. The incident is definitely suggestive of God's mercy through Christ to a lost world. It was so even then. The soldiers were gambling before the eyes of the crucified Savior; and in so doing, they were fulfilling an ancient prophecy that was connected with God's promise of a Savior to the world. The dying Lord saw these facts; and the effect upon His mind and heart would therefore be definite and certain. This incident was the Father's reminder to His dying Son of the world-wide interest in the sacrifice the Son of God was then making of Himself on the Cross.

This interpretation is more than speculative. The thought of the Gentile world always suggested to Jesus His mission to save the world through His own sacrificial death. A former instance of this association in His mind and heart was seen in the agonizing of His spirit on that occasion when the Greeks came and asked to see Him.²⁸ The presence of these Roman

²⁸John 12:20-33. See also the discussion of this passage in Chapter XVIII, pages 469-470.

soldiers at this time would tend to turn the Savior's mind again to the thought of world-wide redemption purchased with His own precious Blood. The more effectively would this be true in view of the particular pagan vice that was being practiced then before His sight.²⁷

The total situation here, as such was always interpreted by Christ, would suggest the universality of sin, and of divine love, and of saving grace. This seemingly trivial incident would therefore naturally direct the thought of Jesus to the Source of all hope and life eternal in the universal heart of God, Who "so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." That thought would carry the mind of Jesus at once to the Covenant of Redemption, in which He engaged with His Father to save the world.²⁸ The touch of prophecy which was fulfilled in this incident would suggest the historical outworking of that Plan of Redemption thus made between the Father and the Son, and thus being wrought out in human history that culminated in His own death on the Cross. These are the lines of natural association in the mind of Jesus, as He looked upon those Roman gamblers, who represented the world of sin and sinners for whom He was giving His life a ransom. And this line of association would support His own spirit in that great hour: for it would bring His thought back to Himself there on the Cross, and the Hope of the world resting upon Him.

So it was that the Lord of Glory thought of Himself as a Sacrifice; and so, too, He faced, with willing heart, His humiliation to save the lost world. But as He entered this valley of shadows and sorrow, it was perfectly proper that His Spirit should be exalted with the present assurance of His sovereign triumph. So it came to pass, in the providence of God, that His Son went down to death with a superscription of Royalty over His Divine Head. This idea is not fanciful: for there was in the placing of this Superscription by Pilate, very obviously, both the malice of man, and the deeper providential purpose of God.

**4. Proclaimed
Universally to be a
King**
Matthew 27:37
Mark 15:26
Luke 23:38
John 19:19-22

²⁷The vice here exhibited by the soldiers was gambling, which, in its power to deprave life, is among the worst of evils. Gambling is a composite evil, uniting in itself many kinds of sin. Gambling, like the other cardinal forms of personal and social corruption, is basically opposed to the teachings of Christ and of the Christian Religion. The vice here exhibited is thoroughly and completely pagan; and it was therefore a fit symbol of the pagan world of sin for which Christ died.

²⁸See Chapter XX, Note 6.

The Superscription of Christ's Royalty was written in three languages, the facts, as given by John, being as follows: "And Pilate wrote a title also, and put it on the cross. And there was written, JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. This title therefore read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and in Latin, and in Greek."

(1) Facts of the Trilingual Superscription of His Kingship

Naturally enough, the chief priests strongly protested to Pilate against this Superscription, desiring him to modify the statement from one of *fact* to one of *mere claim* on the part of Jesus. They said to Pilate, "Write not, 'The King of the Jews'; but, that He said, 'I am King of the Jews.'" But Pilate, refusing to consider such a change in the Superscription, made his memorable reply to the Jews, saying, "What I have written I have written." This Superscription is given, in some form, in all of the Gospels, the details, as given above, being amplified by John.²⁹

²⁹The simple records of this Superscription have given rise to several interesting questions for discussion, some of which are the following:

(1) *The Writing of the Tablet.* The tablet itself was a white gypsum covered board, on which was written, in black letters, the charge of the condemned prisoner. This board was usually suspended from the prisoner's neck as he was taken to the place of execution; but the tablet was also sometimes carried before the prisoner. In the case of Jesus, however, as John's use of verbs seems to suggest, Pilate may have deliberately prepared this carefully worded Superscription after the procession had gone to Golgotha, and sent it later to be placed on the Cross of Christ.

(2) *The Three Languages of the Superscription.* John states that the Superscription was written in three languages—Hebrew, Latin, and Greek. Whether this was the order in which the three languages appeared on the tablet, is a question which cannot now be fully determined. There were obvious reasons why the Hebrew (the national Aramaic), familiar to all the Jews, should come first in the order. There were equally strong reasons why the official Latin, the language of the Law, familiar to the officials, the soldiers, and the Romans, should come first. There were also good reasons that the Greek, the common Hellenistic dialect, widely known to the Jews, and used by all classes, and possibly by all countries then present, should speak first on that great cosmopolitan occasion. The practice of writing such multilingual inscriptions was common to the Romans in the provincial cities where people came together from all countries of the Roman Empire.

Neither can it be determined with certainty which languages the several Gospel Writers have quoted in their respective renderings of this Superscription. Opinions differ, and arguments are possible for any arrangement. The following arrangement is plausible (although Matthew may have given the Hebrew version, since he wrote for the Palestinian Jews; and Luke, the Greek, since he wrote a universal Gospel; and John, the Greek, since he wrote from Ephesus and at a much later date; but Mark, who wrote from Rome, almost certainly gave the Latin version):

MATT. 27:37 THIS IS JESUS	THE KING OF THE JEWS	GREEK OR HEBREW
MARK 15:26	THE KING OF THE JEWS	LATIN
LUKE 23:38 THIS IS	THE KING OF THE JEWS	LATIN OR GREEK
JOHN 19:19 JESUS OF NAZARETH,	THE KING OF THE JEWS	HEBREW OR GREEK

(3) *The Variations in the Form of this Superscription.* From the above arrangement it will appear that no two of the Gospels give the full wording of the Superscription exactly alike; but that all of them do have the central part of the charge against Jesus exactly alike. The variations, which almost certainly were parts of the

John, in his more detailed account of this Superscription, has suggested that Pilate was definitely and personally responsible for the things that happened. What then

(3) Pilate's
Purposes in This
Superscription

were Pilate's motives and purposes for thus designating Christ as *The King of the Jews*?

Possibly, as some think, Pilate wanted to give a political scare to the Jews, who were all too prone to insurrection, by suggesting that such would be the fate of all who might undertake to rebel against the Roman Government. Possibly, as already described in this chapter, Pilate had planned in this way for personal and official retaliation upon the chief priests and other rulers of the Jews, toward whom he had indignation because they had overruled his will and judgment in the Trial of Christ. He desired to mock them by turning upon their own heads their malicious plans of mockery.

But there is still another possibility as to the motives and purposes of Pilate in the erection of this particular Superscription. Throughout the Trial, he had maintained that Jesus was an innocent and just Person. Pilate's estimate was just and right: perhaps it was even nearer adequate than some have thought. Possibly he saw in Jesus of Nazareth, in some exalted sense, a King of Men, worthy of being recognized, even in His death, as the Highest Issue of His Race. He was a King of Men; and it is quite possible that Pilate honestly desired to pay Jesus this last and well-deserved honor before all the world.

varying versions on the Cross, were probably the explanations, added in the different languages, to the central part of the charge.

These differences in the several versions on the Cross may have arisen in either of two ways. (a) Pilate may have written a rough draft of the short Latin version, *Rex Judaeorum*, and then have given this to some subordinate to translate into the Hebrew, and the Greek, with the results that appear. (b) Pilate may have carefully made these differences himself, in view of the different classes for whom he was writing. That is, his Roman (Latin) readers would need only the brief legal statement, as given by Mark and Luke. Those who suppose that John has given the Hebrew version on the Cross see an added thrust at the high caste Jews of Jerusalem in the addition of the despised designation, *Jesus of Nazareth*. If Matthew gave the Greek version, then it is supposed that the author of the original tablet on the Cross tried to combine into this Hellenistic statement, understood by all the people, the wording of the other two versions, but that he dropped here the words of *Nazareth*, because these words would have, outside of Palestine, no special significance. These views are necessarily conjectural; but about the next topic there is much more of certainty.

(4) *The Futile Protest of the Chief Priests.* The Cross of Jesus was erected near a public highway, where many passersby read this trilingual Superscription. The effect was embarrassing to the religious leaders of the Jews at Jerusalem, who resented this identification of Jesus, Whom they classed as an imposter and blasphemer, with their national cause. They therefore protested to Pilate, as already stated. But he refused to heed their protest.

There was splendid tragic irony in this failure of their protest. They had zealously renounced all allegiance, except that to Caesar. In this instance they lost their first humble petition to the Court of Caesar. Rome would rule them with a rod of iron. There was also the voice of destiny in this failure. They had, in their opposition to Christ's Kingdom, sold themselves under an unpardonable sin; and yet, in their stricken weakness at last, they could not even remove the title of *King* from over the head of the dying Christ. There was in this failure the voice of a double doom, national and spiritual.

Pilate's motives were doubtless many-sided. He knew that it was politically safe to pay this high honor to Jesus at that time.

**(4) Providential
Significance of the
Superscription**

Pilate probably hoped that his plan would accomplish three things. It would honor Jesus. It would ease his own conscience for having delivered this Just Person to death.

It would wreak a measure of vengeance upon the haughty Jews, whom Pilate hated. But in all of these purposes, and in others if he had them, Pilate was being led, as it were, by the hand of destiny, to a definite conclusion. There was in this incident of the Superscription a deeper providential significance, at the thought of which Pilate, had he known, would have been paralyzed with terror. Over the head of the Christ, Heaven's Eternal King, Pilate, with never a thought of the providential suggestiveness of his action, had erected the inscription of Royalty, and then, as if for all time, had defended the sovereign title thus erected.

The whole performance was a dramatic scene fit for the gods to witness. Doubtless the angels of Heaven, who concern themselves much about the mysteries of salvation,³⁰ watched this event with more than ordinary interest. The heathen had raged,—the heathenized Jew first, and then the Gentile. They had combined, by force of necessity among themselves, against the Lord, and against His Anointed, to cast Him down. And yet they had declared Him to be a King! Yea, even "The King of the Jews!"

So said the heathen Governor! And he could not be persuaded to modify his proclamation! The very Power which the Jews had invoked to crucify Heaven's King would not now uncrown Him crucified! Surely that Superscription on the Cross of Jesus expressed the supreme tragic irony of all history! It was irony to the Jew first, and then also to the Roman Governor: for Jesus was, in fact, the King of them all. Surely, too, that scene, with its deeper ironic significance, which is now well known to history, was enough to make the Hosts of Heaven to laugh in derision at those who considered themselves triumphant in their own petty purposes on that occasion.³¹

**(5) Divine
Enthronement of
Christ by This
Superscription**

And the Son of God saw Himself thus crowned in the presence of His enemies, and even by them. That was the exalted purpose of Heaven in this Superscription. By it, and what it suggested, the Cross was transformed into a Throne. By it was revealed the sovereign

³⁰See *1. Peter* 1:10-12.

³¹See *Psalms* 2:1-12.

control of God over the deepest forces of human nature, causing them, even in their freest action, to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ. By it even the wrath of men was made to suggest the universal sovereignty of the Lord Jesus, Whom that wrath was trying to destroy.

This proclamation of Christ's Kingship was made to the Hebrew, and the Greek, and the Roman, to each in his native tongue; and these are they who have built the foundations of the civilized world. The proclamation was made in the languages consecrated to Religion, to Art, and to Law; and in all of these basic interests of life Christ was destined to reign supreme. The great Truth had been voiced: what though it were the voice of heathen mockery!³² The great deed was done, and could never be forgotten. The true meaning of the Cross had been given an expression that was suggestive for all time.

The *form* of knowledge, the *mold* of truth, the *body* of a redeeming perception of Christ, was thus given to the world. It only remained for the Spirit of the Risen Christ to read a fullness of meaning into what the world had here seen and heard, and gone forth to report to the ends of the earth. One fact at least, every Jew and Gentile at Jerusalem could carry back to his own country, when he returned from the Passover. Everyone everywhere could tell his friends that *Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews*, had died on Calvary's Cross. Surely the Son of God, even from His Cross, saw the future in and through this potential situation of His own death. In His Soul's deepest travail, He must have been both satisfied, and profoundly gratified, when He saw the very wrath of His enemies inevitably transformed into the Evangel of His own triumphing Kingdom in the world.³³

3. *Christ Making Intercession for the Transgressors.* Viewed in the light of this deeper suggestiveness in the setting with which God had surrounded the Death of His Son, and the probable effect of that suggestiveness upon the Spirit of the dying Savior, His first words from the Cross sound like an expression of gratitude, profound and divine.

The Mind and Heart of Jesus were so far lifted above the thought of Himself in that awful hour, that He was looking down from His Cross with the compassionate interest of a loving Savior. In His first words from the Cross,

1. **Christ's Prayer
for His Enemies**
Luke 23:34

³²Philippians 1:15-18.

³³Isaiah 53:11.

the Lord Jesus prayed a deep and earnest prayer for those who were putting Him to death. In this prayer He said,

FATHER, FORGIVE THEM;
FOR THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO.

That prayer was brief; but it was complete. It exhibited the two functions of the Redeemer, which are *to love* and *to save*.

**2. Two Functions
of Christ the
Redeemer**

In this prayer of the Savior there was an outgoing of Divine pity for ignorant and helpless sinners. In it there was also an act of definite intercession for those transgressors. Christ came to heal the sick, to call the sinners, to save the lost: He makes intercession at the Father's Throne as Savior of the world. Both His saving love and His intercession were exhibited in His first words from the Cross.

These first words exhibit also the sovereign self-possession, and the Divine control of the situation, which the Lord Jesus exercised on this occasion. These words also show how the conscious Divinity within Jesus transformed and glorified the entire scene. Already He had glorified the way to the Cross with prophecy. Already His Cross had been glorified as a Throne. In these first words, He glorified it again as a Seat of Divine Intercession.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE CRUCIFIED CHRIST

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." *John 3:14-15.*

"When ye have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall ye know that I Am He." *John 8:28.*

"For He hath made Him, Who knew no sin, to be a Sin-Offering for us; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."
2. Corinthians 5:21.

Christ was crucified. The deed was done—and yet it was not done. Many other things were yet to be accomplished, during the two long stages which are to be considered in this chapter, and in that which follows, before the Son of God should finally commend His Spirit to the Father, and leave His Body to be buried. Without interruption, therefore, this chapter continues the previous narrative outline, analyzing in detail the events of the next stage in the general course of that great day of the Crucifixion.

III. The Third Stage: Two Views of the Crucified Christ

This third stage of events covers the time intervening between the completion of the Crucifixion proper and the coming of the

Immanuel: Jesus
Divine and Human
Matthew 27:39-44
Mark 15:29-32
Luke 23:35-43
John 19:25-27

darkness upon the earth at twelve o'clock noon. During this interval the crucified Christ hung upon the Cross in plain view of all the people. How long this period was cannot now be determined with certainty. The first stage of the Crucifixion Day was occupied by the events that occurred between

Pilate's Court and Golgotha, where Jesus was crucified. The second stage was occupied with the actual crucifying of Jesus, as described in the previous chapter. This third stage was occupied by the events that happened while the Lord Jesus hung on the Cross before the coming of the darkness at noon.

The time-division cannot be determined. However, it is quite probable that the whole period from nine o'clock until noon was about equally divided between the second and the third stages of the day's events, as defined above. Certainly there is no want of incident to fill up either stage under such an equal division of the time. The wonder is rather that so much could have happened in either stage within less than two hours. The many

events of this third stage combine in such way as to set forth two distinct views of the Lord Jesus Christ while He was hanging there on His Cross.

(A) The First View of the Crucified Christ: As Passively Enduring the Contradiction of Sinners

The first group of events during this third stage in the general program of the Crucifixion presents the crucified Christ as quietly and passively enduring the contradiction of sinners. Literally, as the word means, the dying Son of God was *spoken against*, railed at and abused, by those about the Cross who spoke from evil passions. In literal fulfillment of ancient prophecy, Christ the Savior was reproached by many.

The second group of events during this stage combined to present the complete Personality of the Lord Jesus in action: both His Divine and His Human Natures in characteristic expression of themselves. At first, however, the Lord Jesus hung on the Cross calmly, probably with bowed head, and doubtless with profound thoughts moving upon his mind and spirit, while the various unfriendly groups about the Cross looked upon Him, and railed at Him thus crucified.

I. The Contradiction of Popular Prejudice. The first unfriendly voice was that of popular prejudice, which was almost certainly inspired by the rulers of the Jews. This voice of prejudice was composite, superficial, and wanting in sincerity. It represented an unstable class of the common people, who, in their characteristic fickleness of mind, had forgotten their recent applause of Jesus, and had forsaken Him, and even turned against Him in this sad hour. This voice of prejudice represented also the low-minded rabble, who follow the currents of low feelings on all occasions. It represented also certain of the Roman soldiers, who had caught up the popular contagion of scorn.¹ But this voice did not represent "the people (who) stood beholding," as Luke has described the better classes of the common people on that occasion. Luke was pointing to that nobler group, perhaps himself and many other disciples among them, who stood there with independence of thought, and with wonder and amazement in their minds and hearts, as they looked upon the Cross of the crucified Christ.

¹Luke states that the soldiers also mocked Jesus, jeering at Him as the "King of the Jews," and coming to Him with mocking offers of vinegar to drink, which they probably snatched away again. Compare Chapter XXIII, Note 22, for this action of the soldiers.

It was the more fickle-minded part of the people, and the low-minded, and the soldiers, who engaged in this scornful raillery against the Son of God. Passing by, and wagging their heads, they exclaimed, "Ha! Thou that destroyest the Temple, and buildest it in three days! Save Thyself, and come down from the cross!" Or, as Matthew has quoted their saying, "If Thou art the Son of God, come down from the cross!"

Thus the people who were prejudiced insulted Jesus in His agony, fulfilling again the words of ancient Scripture.² When these railings are analyzed, they show that the assailants of Jesus attacked Him at three important points. They misrepresented the thoughts of His early sayings about the Temple, making them refer to the physical structure there in the City of Jerusalem. They imposed an impossible condition of faith upon the Saviorship of Jesus, commanding Him to "come down from the Cross, that we may see and believe." They sneered at the Divinity of Jesus. "If Thou art the Son of God," they said, using words which echoed the language of Satan himself in his Temptations of the Lord Jesus.³ In all of these jeers at the crucified Savior, there was nothing that even suggested the faintest understanding of His thoughts, His Nature, His Messiahship, or His mission to save the world.

There can be little doubt that this scorn was inspired, and that the scoffing multitude only reflected the poisoning propaganda of the chief priests, the scribes and the elders. These rulers of the Jews, as already seen during the Roman Trial of Jesus,⁴ did mingle freely with the common people, and did prompt them what to say and what to do. That seems to be the plans which the rulers of Jews had followed again on this occasion. They had taken up that early saying of Christ about the Temple; because that saying seemed to be concrete and easily workable under a misrepresentation before the people. In fact, it is very interesting that the enemies of Jesus never forgot His words about the Temple, and never failed to propagate their own misrepresentation of those words on all occasions, even in their persecution of the disciples long after the Ascension of Christ.⁵ Christ had spoken not of destroying and rebuilding the Temple in Jerusalem, but of

²*Psalms* 22:7, 8, 17; and 109:25.

³For the Temptations, see Chapter III, pages 70-74.

⁴See Chapter XXII, page 560.

⁵Compare the charge made against Stephen, in *Acts* 6:13-14.

His own Death and Resurrection. Very little, however, did His enemies realize that, in their malice, they were rapidly bringing this prophecy of Christ, in its true meaning, to a convincing and powerful fulfillment.

2. *The Contradiction of Sin-Blind Opposition.* "In like manner also the chief priests mocked Him, with the scribes and the elders."

Despised, and They
Esteemed Him Not
Matthew 27:41-43
Mark 15:31-32
Luke 23:35

This *likewise also*, as the words may be rendered, suggests the part that these rulers had been playing in raising the bad passions of the mob. But these rulers were even more bitter, more comprehensive in their thought, and even more refined, in a way, in their own scoffing at the crucified Christ, than they had been in their previous agitation of the people and the soldiers.

With resolute blindness to all truth, the rulers of God's once Chosen People, railed and scoffed at His dying Son in these

1. Their Everlasting
Reproach and
Perpetual Shame
Cf. Jer. 23:40

words of mockery: "He saved others; Himself He cannot save. He is the King of Israel; let Him now come down from the Cross, and we will believe on Him. He trusteth on God; let Him deliver Him now, if He desireth Him: for He said, 'I am the Son of God'." Such words they spoke among themselves, with only mocking gestures toward Him on the Cross, Whom they disdained even to address directly.

In these words of mockery, the rulers of the Jews stated three separate things. The first was a taunt; the second, a demand; and the third, the outline of a test. The first of these, the taunt that He could not save Himself, turned upon Christ's using His own divine power for Self-ministry. The second,

2. Their Satanic
Sources
Self-Exhibited

the command that He come down from the Cross as a condition of faith on the part of His enemies, turned upon the conditions upon which, as they said, His enemies would yield Him a kingdom in their own hearts. The third, the challenge that God should save His own Son from their hands, turned upon the direct question of Christ's own Divine Nature. In this analysis of the three elements of this mockery of Jesus, the reader will readily recognize the full program of Satan when he attacked the Lord Jesus in the three great Temptations.⁶

⁶Compare the account of the Temptations (Note 3 above); and note that the Devil then and now is consistent with himself.

Obviously, as expressed in these three scoffing statements, the rulers of the Jews considered themselves as forever done with three things,—Jesus Christ, and His Kingdom, and His Divinity. Beyond their words, far in the background of their minds, it is easy to see the old charge of Beelzebub, and to see, also, deep in their vicious hearts, a determined revenge against Christ for His counter charge against them of an unpardonable sin.⁷ The plain purpose of His enemies at this time was to complete their overthrow of Christ's Kingdom, by leaving no vestige of it in the minds and hearts of that great representative multitude assembled about the Cross.

The method of their madness was purely satanic. These rulers resorted to ridicule, which is always an effective argument with the low-minded. But the enemies of Jesus resorted to even worse methods. They proposed triumph to themselves by throwing the burden of an impossible proof upon the Lord

**(2) Satanic Methods
Used Against
Jesus Christ**

Jesus Christ. In an ecstasy of satanic glee, anticipating the certain triumph of their three sayings, these enemies of the Lord challenged the Power, the Kingship, and the Divinity of the Son of God.

Having thus laid their challenge, then these enemies of the Lord demanded that He do that which would contradict, point by point, His Power, His Kingship, and His Divine Nature, before they would believe on Him. That is, they demanded that the Son of God fully and completely deny Himself on His Divine side. Such a denial, as they knew, would have been a complete and self evident victory at the point of their central opposition to the Lord Jesus, Who had claimed Himself to be the Son of God. But this satanic program failed to work on this occasion, just as Satan's own program had failed to work in the great Temptations of Christ. In both instances, the Lord of Glory calmly watched His adversaries spend their rage in vain. The methods of Satan, and of his shrewdest followers, could never prevail against the Son of God.

3. *The Contradiction of Personal Unbelief.* In all the world, there are three classes who have spoken against the Lord Jesus Christ. They are those who are misled in spiritual thought and life,⁸

⁷See Chapter XII, pages 269-278.

⁸False teaching may have two results. It may lead a soul to eternal death. It may lead to the contradiction and blaspheming of the Son of God. The thought of the importance of both of these results wrought heavily upon the mind of Jesus respecting false teachers. The same importance of these results was felt later by Paul and John, as seen in their unsparing attitudes toward those who would try to lead men astray. See the Index, under "False Teachers."

those who are inspired by Satanic opposition, and those who are in ignorance and unbelief. Two of these groups have already, as described above, reviled the crucified Christ as He hung upon the Cross. The third group has yet to speak, rounding out the "contradiction of sinners," which the Son of God so patiently and silently endured.

**Ignorantly in
Unbelief**

Matthew 27:44

Mark 15:32

Luke 23:39

But that third group were ready to take their turn at the common mockery of Jesus. Matthew has recorded that "the robbers also that were crucified with Him cast upon Him the same reproach." Apparently, both of these robbers joined, at first, in this jeering at the Lord Jesus. Neither Matthew nor Mark, in fact, has recorded anything beyond this general initial statement, that "they that were crucified with Him reproached Him."

But Luke has given a fuller record. In fact, Luke seems to have begun his account of this raillery at the point where Matthew and Mark have left off their records. At least, for the railing of the one unrepenting malefactor, Luke has used a stronger verb (meaning to *blaspheme*), than that which had been used for both malefactors by Matthew and Mark. It would seem that a more intense form of abuse had set in at that point where Luke began to show the differences in the minds of the two dying men in respect to the Lord Jesus Christ. It is quite possible that Luke has recorded only the results of a long debate between the men, which had led to the decisiveness of the different views expressed.

Luke has made the following additional statement about the raillery of the two malefactors. "And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on Him, saying, 'Art not Thou the Christ? Save Thyself and us!' But the other answered, and rebuking him said, 'Dost thou not even fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this Man hath done nothing amiss.' And he said to Jesus, 'Lord, remember me when Thou comest into (or in) Thy Kingdom.'"

This second malefactor had repented of his sin and turned to Jesus, with results that will presently be analyzed. But the first malefactor continued to rail in a manner that would nullify all human responsibility in connection with the salvation of souls.

**1. Christ
Reproached by the
Robbers from Their
Crosses**

**2. Luke's Account
of Changing
Attitudes in the
Two Robbers
Luke 23:39-43**

That was true of both robbers in their first attitude toward the crucified Savior. In his continued raillery, as quoted by Luke,

**3. Nullification of
Human
Responsibility
in Salvation**

this robber demanded that Jesus save them of His own accord, and apart from any motions of faith or repentance on their part.

This demand involves the common contradiction of the world against the saving

grace of Jesus Christ, which is always conditioned upon repentance and faith. This demand was based upon the assumption that salvation is *of force*, and not *of grace through faith*. But that assumption never was, and is not now, true. Man must repent and believe on Jesus Christ before he can be saved.

The worldly mind is prone to say, "If Christ is the Savior, then let Him save us." Men who are disposed to shirk responsibility seem to think it possible in this way to throw the whole responsibility for their own souls upon the Lord Jesus. But God does not save men that way. Salvation has its conditions. Those conditions are repentance, and faith, and baptism into the Kingdom of Christ.

Christ could not be a Savior, and yet save Himself on the day of His Crucifixion, as this reviler of the Lord had suggested. Neither could Christ save that reviler then, nor indeed can He save any man to-day, who approaches the question of salvation in that impossible attitude of mind and heart. Men must come to God through Christ, and in the way which God has appointed. Men must recognize a solemn responsibility for their own souls, and then express that responsibility in terms of repentance, faith, and dedication of life to God and righteousness. Christ does save; but He saves through faith, and not by force.

**(B) The Second View of the Crucified Christ: As Actively
Exhibiting His Complete Personality**

At the close of the second stage of the Crucifixion Day the Lord Jesus became active, after His quiet submission to the cruelties of the crucifixion proper, in a prayer for the forgiveness of those who had crucified Him. At the close of this second stage He became active again, after submitting silently to the raillery already described. At the close of the fourth stage He will be seen again to speak out actively, in His last moments, after His long agony in the silent darkness. At the end of this third stage Christ became active in two events which exhibit the two aspects of His complete Personality—first, His Divine Nature, and then His Human Nature.

1. An Assertion of Christ's Divine Saviorship. In a dramatic and effective manner, the Divine side of Christ's Personality was brought actively to the front at this time. That was done in connection with the penitence of the converted Robber, who was then dying on his own cross, which stood beside that of Jesus. This incident, from another angle, has been partially considered already. From the present point of view, it will be seen that Jesus Christ asserted Himself to this dying man as a Divine Savior.

Wages of Sin

vs.

Gift of God

Luke 23:39-43

Contrasted with the scoffing multitude, and with himself as a scoffer at first, this penitent Robber had learned the secret of salvation. Looking up in faith to the crucified Savior, this man prayed, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into (or in) Thy Kingdom." Such a prayer of penitence and faith is the kind that saves the soul. It is remarkably like that of the humble Publican, who said, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner." Christ had already given assurance that such a prayer should bring a sense of justification to him who prayed in this manner.⁹

Before uttering this prayer, this "Penitent Thief," as he is commonly called, had defended Jesus against the reproaches of the other Robber who was crucified. In that defense, and in this prayer for his own soul, this penitent man showed a remarkably clear and definite knowledge of Christ. With fearless confidence and directness, this man contradicted all the points made in the raillery against Jesus, and then reproached the dying man who had thus reproached the Lord.

**(1) What This Man
Knew About Jesus**

This "Dying Thief" knew that there was power in Jesus to save: to save without coming down from the Cross: to save in His own way. Hence there were no conditions in this man's faith. He saw that Christ was a King: a King with a Kingdom of the Spirit, which had a future far beyond the seeming eclipse of and by present circumstances. Hence this man looked to, and leaned upon, the sovereign power of Christ, as it should be revealed in the consummation of His Kingdom.

This penitent Robber, like Pilate in the Trial, and like the Roman Centurion later in that day, was thoroughly convinced of Christ's innocence. In some way, probably by the voice of the

⁹See Chapter XVII, pages 416-417.

inner Spirit, this man was made to feel that Jesus was dying for other cause than that of His own sin. By this contrasting touch with the holy character of Jesus, this man had been made also to feel the enormity of his own sin, and had received an awakening of conscience in his own soul. In short, this man, with remarkable clearness, had seen Who, and What, Jesus was, and had thrown himself with confidence upon the Lord Jesus as a Divine and sufficient Savior.

Whence had this dying Robber this definite knowledge of Jesus? Had he seen and heard Jesus before? Had certain previous impressions of his concerning Jesus been fully confirmed by the manner and the majesty of Jesus in this hour of His death?

(2) Whence This Man's Knowledge of Jesus?

Had he read aright those Superscriptions of Christ's Kingship, getting from them the deeper providential truth thus announced to all the world? Had the naming of *Jesus of Nazareth* revived in this man's mind precious saving truth heard in previous experiences with the Lord Jesus in Galilee? Had this man taken particular and understanding notice of Christ's prayer for the forgiveness of His own murderers? Had he heard also, with equal understanding, as the procession went to Golgotha that morning, the Lord's prophecy to the women? Is it possible that this condemned Robber had been lodged in the Palace of Pilate, and had heard there the Lord's definite statements to the Roman Governor about His own Spiritual Kingdom?

Who was this dying Robber? Could he have been a previous adherent of Jesus in Galilee, or a sympathizer with His work in that Province? As such, had he been over zealous in some imprudent way, perhaps being a leader of those who had tried to make Jesus their King,¹⁰ and thereby brought himself into the toils of the Roman law? And had he, in the excruciating agony, anticipated and experienced, on this occasion, simply failed to recognize the Lord Jesus before reading the title on the Cross, or hearing the scoffings of the Jews? Had the very spirit of evil in the revilings of the Jewish rulers so far negatived what they had said as to make their words the suggestions of positive truth in the mind of this dying man? May not all of this man's knowledge have resulted from the mysterious inner illuminating power of God's Spirit, interpreting aright the spiritual significance of those things that were happening on that great day before this man's eyes?

¹⁰See Chapter XI, pages 251-254.

However this man came by his knowledge of the truth, he knew enough to turn to Christ, with full confidence, as the Savior.

**2. Response of Life
and Assurance**
Luke 23:43

When this dying man prayed to Jesus, saying, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into (or in) Thy Kingdom," the Lord's response was one of life and assurance. In answer to this earnest prayer, the Son of God made this reply:

VERILY I SAY UNTO THEE,
TO-DAY SHALT THOU BE WITH ME
IN PARADISE.¹¹

Doubtless Jesus rejoiced in this outlet for His own divine and saving love. Doubtless He rejoiced also in this concrete correction of the reproaching misconceptions about salvation in the mind of the other dying Robber. Readily, therefore, the Lord Jesus, speaking in the full consciousness of His Divine authority, gave this penitent man the awards of faith that were most suitable to his dying condition.

Christ gave him life. Then Christ gave him assurance: the assurance both of being *remembered* that very day, and of *fellowship* that day also, in the Spiritual Kingdom of the Lord. There was no other blessing so appropriate as these to one who had found Christ in the dying hour.¹²

Eternal Life
Through Jesus
Christ Our Lord
Romans 6:23

Had there been a life of service before this man, Christ would doubtless have given other blessings, through the use of which this man might have worked out his own assurance. But the man was dying; and Christ gave what the dying man needed most.

2. *An Assertion of Christ's Human Love.* Luke has recorded the exhibition of Christ's Divine Nature in and through His

¹¹The Greek *Paradeisos*, coming from the Persian word *pardes*, means a park or a garden. The word was in common use in the Lord's day, but this is the only time in which He is quoted as having used this word. Ordinarily among the Jews, the word signified the Garden of Eden, or "Abraham's Bosom," as the better other world was called. This word represented the home of the blessed, after death had separated the soul and body. The word is frequently used by other New Testament writers: as Paul, in 2. *Corinthians* 12:4; and John, in *Revelation* 2:7. All of these writers may have heard the Lord's use of this word on this occasion.

¹²Rightly understood, this incident gives little encouragement for a hope that depends on death-bed repentance. Of course that is possible: for Christ is always found of them who sincerely seek Him. But the analogy of the "Thief on the Cross," in each man's experience, is not the dying hour; but it is that moment in his life when he comes into contact with Jesus Christ. "To-day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your heart." (*Psalms* 95:7-8).

These words to the dying Robber were the Lord's second words from the Cross. The first words pointed to a sinful past, the second to an eternal future; the first to merciful forgiveness, the second to effective salvation; the first to pardon of sin, the second to blessed fellowship with Jesus.

saving the penitent Robber who was crucified on that day. John has added a supplementary account of an incident which reflects

Human (Filial)
Love of Jesus: Love
in Its Perfection
John 19:25-27

the Human Nature of Jesus, and His exercise of perfect human love. This is seen in the love wherewith Jesus committed His own Mother to the care of the Apostle John. In the record of this love, as also in the love itself, there is not one superfluous touch, either in the circumstances, or in the expression, or in the response. The act of love, and the inspired expression of it, are alike perfect.

John alone among the Gospel writers has given a record of this loving care on the part of Jesus for His Mother. John seems

1. Christ's Loving
Care of His Mother

clearly to have intended that the reader should see and feel a direct contrast between the heartless gambling of the soldiers for the Lord's garments,¹³ and this instance of perfect love on the part of the Lord Himself. John's record is brief, but perfect. Every phrase of his statement is full of suggestion for fruitful discussion and pleasant speculation. The record was made in these words:

"But there were standing by the Cross of Jesus His Mother, and His Mother's sister, Mary, the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw His Mother, and the Disciple standing by, whom He loved, He saith unto His Mother,

WOMAN, BEHOLD, THY SON!

Then saith He to the Disciple,

BEHOLD, THY MOTHER!

And from that hour the Disciple took her unto his own home."

The mind loves to linger with Mary, the Mother of Jesus, on this eventful day. She had doubtless gone out to Golgotha, with

2. Thoughts on the
Personal
Relationships of
This Incident

the morning procession, surrounded by her friends, and probably supported in her grief by the strong arm of John himself, who has told the story. Some have argued, from certain suggestions in this passage, that Jesus

and John must have been first cousins. That question cannot be settled with certainty.¹⁴ But there can be no doubt about the love

¹³In this incident, as also in the attention which Jesus gave to the two crucified robbers, there is full proof that He was giving heed to the things that were happening before Him as He hung there on the Cross. John here intimates that the eyes of Jesus had just passed on, in their survey, from watching the gambling, when they fell upon His Mother standing somewhere, among her friends, near the Cross. The suggestion is that Jesus surveyed the situation, group by group, incident by incident.

¹⁴For a study of these women, see Chapter VI, page 139 n. 15, and 140; see also "Women" in the Index

and confidence between them, as it was exhibited on this occasion. Probably this commitment of His Mother to the care of John was the Lord's thoughtful and loving dismissal of her from the scene, to prevent her from witnessing the awful agony that was to follow, when darkness had covered the land.

Mary had long since learned to heed the suggestions of Her Wonderful Son;¹⁵ and she probably consented at once to take her sorrowful departure from the Cross. What must have been the thought of her heart! She had seen all Heaven and Earth concerned in the birth of this Son! Now she beheld all Heaven and Earth again concerned in His death! Imagination hesitates to suggest the feelings that must have entered her heart when the darkness fell upon the world, while her Son was dying upon His Cross.

John's last words, in his record of this incident, have been understood to mean that he took Mary at once away from the scene, to some place of quiet security. This was probably true: for Mary disappears from the story at this point, and does not re-appear in person until the Christians had assembled for the ten days of prayer in the Upper Room, which occurred between the Lord's Ascension and the Day of Pentecost. Mary is not mentioned as among the women who had part in the burial of Jesus and in the events of His Resurrection Day. However, there are suggestions, as will appear in the later discussion, which seem to show that she was not far away from these central events. John's final testimony, as an eye-witness to the later events of the crucified Christ, seem clearly to imply that he had returned to the Cross after taking Mary away to her place of safety.¹⁶ Perhaps he took her to his own home, or his own lodging place, and returned immediately to the Cross, so that he might witness every event connected with the Crucifixion.

The main significance in this committing of His Mother to the loving care of a dear personal friend lies in the fact that

3. Significance of This Act of Love

Christ's great and perfect Human Heart spoke out in these words, which were the last words of the Lord in this third stage of the Crucifixion Day. It was the Human in Jesus that spoke in this last message. He was almost ready to enter the Valley of Shadows. It was therefore both logical and proper that the last emphasis of this stage of events should be laid upon the Human Nature of the Lord Jesus. The import of this final emphasis will

¹⁵Compare Mary's words in *John* 2:5. See Chapter XXV, page 631.

¹⁶See Chapter XXVII, pages 657-658.

be more fully realized in the next chapter, which deals with the facts of the darkness and of the Lord's death.

Meantime, in closing this chapter, a general observation may be made on the story of the Crucifixion as a whole. By this time it is evident that there is a unifying principle which is running through the entire story of the Crucifixion. That principle is the constant interplay between the Divine Nature and the Human Nature in Jesus Christ, as the events of the day progressed from one center of events to another.

**Interplay of the
Human and the
Divine**

This principle has been evident in each stage of the story. In the first stage, the Human strength of Jesus was seen to sink beneath the burden of the Cross; but His Divine Foreknowledge, only a moment later, was outlining the future woes of Jerusalem, and the Jewish Race. In the second stage, Jesus, in His Human Nature, calmly endured the nailing of His Body to the Cross; but in His Divine Authority, He closed that scene with an intercession for His ignorant and sinful murderers. In the third stage, the majestic Divine-Human Spirit of the Lord at first stood calmly together, while He endured the contradiction of sinners, reviling not again when He was reviled. Then acting separately, the Lord Jesus, first in His Divine Power, saved the Penitent Robber, and then, in His Human Love, He committed His Mother to the care of the Apostle John.

In the fourth stage, which is immediately to be considered in the next chapter, the same principle will be seen, in its most sublime expression. The Son of God, in His Human Nature, will die on the Cross; but as the Son of God, he will, with sovereign command of the entire situation and event of His own death, commend His Spirit into the hands of His Divine Father. To that next chapter, with its story of darkness and of death, the reader is now asked to turn his attention.

CHAPTER XXV

THE DEATH OF CHRIST

"Behold the Lamb of God, Which taketh away the sin of the world. *John 1:29. cf. Acts 8:32.*

"The Blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin."
I. John 1:7.

"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." *Romans 5:6.*

"He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross." *Philippians 2:8.*

"Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; and being made perfect, He became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him." *Hebrews 5:8-9.*

This chapter treats of the Death of Christ, and of the incidents and circumstances attending His Death on the Cross. The chapter covers the period of the Darkness on the Day of the Crucifixion. That period lasted for about three hours; and at the close of the Darkness the Savior died. In the general outline of the Crucifixion Day, this period of the Darkness appears as

IV. The Fourth Stage: the Decease of Christ Accomplished at Jerusalem

The time had come when Christ must accomplish His "decease at Jerusalem," about which He had conferred with Moses and

**Atonement Beneath
the Veil of Darkness**
Matthew 27:45-56

Mark 15:33-41

Luke 23:44-49

John 19:28-37

Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration.¹ The supernatural setting of the stage at this time was well in keeping with the things that were then taking place. Men had spent their utmost rage against the Lord Jesus Christ; but the Lord God was easily able to still that rage of men into a solemn attention, while

He, with a mighty hand in deeds of terror, suggested to the world what it meant for His Son to suffer and die as an Atonement for sin—a suffering, and death, and atonement, which God Himself thought to be most fittingly accomplished beneath a veil of darkness.

The Setting of the Stage for the Death of Christ. This darkness, which veiled the sufferings of Christ, according to the

¹See *Luke 9:31*, and the Transfiguration, as discussed above in Chapter XIV, pages 331-333.

statement of Luke, "came over the whole land." This darkness began at mid-day, when the day was at the brightest. It lasted from twelve o'clock noon until three o'clock in the afternoon, at which hour the Savior expired on the Cross. It is quite clear that this overshadowing of the world was an historical fact, and equally clear that it was a supernatural fact.

The fact of this darkness cannot reasonably be doubted.* It is a part of the Gospel record, and partakes of the same historical

1. Facts of This Darkness

support as the great central Fact of Christ's Death itself. Luke has explained this phenomenon as "the sun's light failing." This darkness was not an eclipse: for the Passover season was at the full moon, a fact which precludes the possibility of an eclipse at that time. This entire stage of events, from twelve until three o'clock, has been lifted up into the realm of the divine. This darkness was supernatural. The voice of God, in this mysterious way, was speaking. Some definite purpose of God was served in this veiling of the world in darkness for three full hours while the Son of God was suffering and dying on the Cross.

Why was this darkness sent at that time? Was it sent for sake of some purpose which God had respecting men? If so,

2. Possible Purposes of This Darkness

what men? The guilty Jews, or the world of men in all ages of the world? Was it sent for sake of some purpose of God respecting His dying Son? Certainly this latter possibility is the far more imposing suggestion. But what was that purpose in the mind and the heart of God?

There are several possibilities, all of which may have in them some measure of truth. The darkness may have been sent as a frowning expression of God's displeasure against the Jews. As

*Matthew, Mark, and Luke, alike, record this darkness as one of the incidents that attended the Death of Christ. Compare also the prophecy in *Amos* 8:9, which pointed to this darkness as the direct doings of God Himself. "And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord God, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day."

There is a support for this supernatural darkness in history, outside of the Bible. "An account of it is given by Phlegon of Tralles, a freeman of the Emperor Adrian. Eusebius, in his records of the year A.D. 33, quotes at length from Phlegon, who says that, in the fourth years of the 202nd Olympiad, there was a great and remarkable eclipse of the sun, above any that had happened before. At the sixth hour the day was turned into the darkness of night, so that stars were seen in the heaven; and there was a great earthquake in Bithynia, which overthrew many houses in the city of Nicæa. Phlegon attributes the darkness which he describes to an eclipse, which was natural enough for him to do. The knowledge of astronomy was then very imperfect. Phlegon also mentions an earthquake. This brings his account into very close correspondence with the sacred narrative." How far this darkness extended, no one knows. The Scriptures state that it extended over the whole land. Dionysius reported that he saw the phenomenon at Heliopolis, in Egypt.

such, it may have been a solemn signal from God for them to stop their reviling of the Lord Jesus Christ.³ It may have been sent as a suggestion of divine wrath against the Jews for their guilt in crucifying the Son of God.

Again, the darkness may have been sent for the sake of men in general: either as in some way a testimony to the Divine interest in this event; or else as a moral challenge to men through the suggestion that even inanimate Nature was thus sympathizing with her dying Lord. Furthermore, the darkness may have been a symbol of the hiding of the Father's Face from His Son in that great hour of suffering; and as such, it would have a direct connection with the cry of Jesus, "My God, My God, why didst (hast) Thou forsake(n) Me?"

These are possible purposes. But the probable purpose of God in sending this darkness would seem to be found by looking in another direction. The most imposing conception of the purpose of this darkness does relate it to the Christ Who was dying; but that relation and purpose are different from that which has already been suggested.

Doubtless the darkness did symbolize something dreadful that was happening in the spirit-world, a something that was directly related to Man. But what was that thing?

(1) Shame of the Cross

It was the *shame of the Cross which Christ was enduring*. But that thing was more intimately related to Christ Himself. Jesus of Nazareth was the one perfectly pure and holy Person in all history. For Him to give Himself to death even at its best would have been great humiliation to Him. To die at all was greatly humiliating to His high and holy Nature. But to die, as He did, in the manner of a common criminal, must have been indescribably painful to His pure Spirit.

But to be dragged about, as the Lord Jesus had been in His Trials, and maltreated, and abused in body, mind, and spirit; then to be crucified, which was the most

(2) That Shame Veiled from View by Divine Love

shameful of all deaths even to evil-doers; and finally, to be insulted in His agony, which was more an agony of mind and spirit than of body—to undergo all of this humiliation was to go beyond human thought of endurance. Yet Jesus Christ endured it all in patient

³See this thought as it is developed more fully in the later section of this chapter, in connection with the Earthquake which accompanied the Death of Jesus on the Cross.

silence. Surely "the Captain of their salvation (was made) perfect through sufferings."

But *perfection* in sufferings was sufficient. The death on the Cross was in itself an Atonement for sin. This adding of shame to that Cross, by such public debasing of the Lord Jesus before the gaze of all the world, was unnecessary. This practice finally reached the point where the pitying Eye of Heaven could allow it no longer. Hence this mantle of divine mercy, the darkness, for Christ's sake, was spread over His sufferings, to lessen, if possible, the shame of His Cross. He did not ask it: but His Father in Heaven did grant this boon, out of infinite love for His dying Son. To Him there yet remained one deeper moment of suffering; but that last supreme agony, which pertained to the profoundest spirit of Christ, was too great and too delicate, as the Father saw it in advance, for human eyes to look *then* upon the agonizing Son of God.⁴

It was primarily for Christ's own sake that the darkness was sent. The Justice of God was fully satisfied in the Death of Christ. The Father of Love desired to shield

(3) Justice and
Love Shield the
Supreme Moment

His Son during that last supreme moment of humiliation: for the supreme moment of agony was yet to come, when those deepest cries of anguish, from amid the darkness, should be wrung from the secret Spirit of the Son of God. No jeering, scoffing eyes might then look upon the scene of His suffering.

This darkness was upon the land from twelve o'clock noon until three in the afternoon. The events that happened during that period are told in the Gospel narratives in two groups. The first of these groups includes the events of the Cross itself: the four sayings of the dying Savior. The other group sets forth

⁴This view of God's purpose in this darkness to shield His dying Son from unnecessary shame would seem to be well grounded. This view makes the darkness a measure of the unspeakable sufferings which Christ endured to save the lost. Furthermore, this view is entirely consistent with Christ's own constant attitude toward His approaching death. He did not fear to die. He did not hesitate to lay down His life, willingly and triumphantly. He knew His mission. He always saw His resurrection and His glorification. (*Matthew* 20:28; *John* 10:15, 17, 18, and many other such statements.) But the attending and debasing circumstances and nature of His death! Upon these things Christ dwelled, in every pre-announcement of His Death, as the things that weighed upon His divine mind and heart. (Compare *Matthew* 16:21-28; 17:22-23; and 20:17-19, and the parallel passages.) This shame of His death was the cup of agony from which His spirit shrank. (*John* 12:27; *Luke* 22:53; *Matthew* 26:39-44; *Philippians* 2:8; *Hebrews* 12:2, and 6:6.) This effect upon His mind was inevitable in view of His pure and exalted Personality. Finally, this view of the divine purpose in this darkness at the Cross of Christ is consistent with the ideas of the Apostolic Church respecting the nature and measure of Christ's sufferings. The writers of that period, both those who were inspired and others, laid final emphasis, in describing Christ's humiliation, upon the shameful circumstances of His death. The Apostles and the early Christians generally counted the suffering of shame for Christ's sake as both the final test and the ultimate glory of discipleship. (See *Matthew* 5:10-12; *Acts* 5:41; and *Romans* 8:17.).

the events in the external world which attended the Death of Christ. To the analysis of these events the reader's attention will now be invited.

(A) The Four Words from the Darkness

Previous to the noon hour, when the darkness began, Jesus had already spoken three times from the Cross. During this fourth stage, while the darkness was upon the land, Jesus spoke four times. He began to speak, however, according to the express statement of Matthew and Mark, only during the last moments of the darkness. In each of His utterances at this time, Jesus spoke of Himself. This He had not done before, except incidentally to call His Mother's attention to His own dying condition. Two of these last utterances of Jesus were voices of agony, and two of them were voices of triumph. Two of them came from His Human Nature, and two of them from His Divine Nature.⁵

I. *The Two Voices of Agony.* Christ spoke twice in agony from the Cross. These utterances were His *Cry of Forsaken*, and His *Cry of Thirst*. They were both the voices of His Human Nature. The first speech expressed an anguish of human spirit: the second, an excruciating pain of His suffering body. Together, these two speeches show the double awfulness of sin, a fact which Christ often emphasized in His teachings and in His warnings to men.⁶

⁵During the Crucifixion Day, after the close of the Trial of Jesus, He spoke eight times. Seven of these utterances, as shown in the following list, were spoken from the Cross.

No.	Time	Topic of Speech	Reference
1.	1 Stage	Prophecy to the Women	Luke 23:28-31
2.	2 Stage (end)	Intercessory Prayer	Luke 23:34
3.	3 Stage (late)	Saving the Penitent Robber	Luke 23:43
4.	3 Stage (end)	Address to His Mother	John 19:26-27
5.	4 Stage (end)	Cry of Forsaken	Matt. 27:46 Mark 15:34
6.	4 Stage (end)	Cry of Thirst	John 19:28
7.	4 Stage (end)	Final Report of His Work	John 19:30
8.	4 Stage (end)	Committing His Spirit	Luke 23:46

It has been supposed by some that Jesus, while hanging on the Cross, was quoting *Psalm 22* entire; and that He cried out aloud in parts of it, as in the fifth speech above. It is also possible that He had a conscious and deliberate purpose to direct certain details of that prophecy, as in the sixth speech above, to their definite fulfillment on this occasion. This suggestion is in harmony with the truth of His sovereign control of the several situations during His Arrest, and the two Trials, and the Crucifixion. Moreover, such a fulfillment of an ancient prophecy as He is supposed here to have brought under His sovereign control and direction, if rightly examined by the Jews, would have shown them clearly why Jesus had not come down from the Cross, in answer to their challenge; and this sovereign action of His may have been the Lord's reply to the scoffings of His enemies.

⁶Compare *Matthew* 10:28; and *Luke* 16:19-31.

The earthquake was past. The three-hours deep darkness still hung over the world. An awe-inspiring stillness had settled upon the scene of the Crucifixion. No word of mockery was heard any more. The people waited with bated breath in the darkness, as if the doom of the world were due. Suddenly there was a deep mysterious cry, which pierced the darkness, reaching every ear in that solemn assembly. It was a cry of spiritual anguish, which arose with loud voice, from the Son of God on the Cross.

Matthew and Mark both give this event; and there is a careful simplicity about the manner in which they have recorded this extraordinary cry of the dying Savior. Matthew has given the fact in the following direct and simple statement, seeming to suggest this cry merely as one more of the wonders that happened on that great day. After recording the darkness, Matthew says, "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying,

**(1) Cry of the
Forsaken Sufferer**

"ELI, ELI, LAMA SABACHTHANI?

MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY DIDST (HAST) THOU
FORSAKE(N) ME?"⁷

These words had an immediate effect with the people. When those who stood near the Cross heard these words, some one of them, certainly a Jew, who spoke with serious intention, ventured to interpret the cry, by saying that Jesus was calling for Elijah. This suggestion was accepted as probably true; and the group, after a general round of mutual exhortations to silence again, waited to see what would happen. "Let be," they said; "let us see whether Elijah cometh to save Him."⁸

⁷Matthew has quoted the Hebrew form of this cry from *Psalm* 22:1. But Mark has given the common Aramaic form of the words. There is a mysterious otherworldness about the very sound of these strange oriental words; and it seems providential to the meaning of this cry, that these original words, as well as their translation, have been given in the English Bible.

⁸Was Jesus actually given the vinegar at this point? Matthew and Mark seem to say that such was the case. But John has affirmed that the vinegar was given in response to Christ's next cry of thirst. Possibly this was the same incident, told in different ways. But it is equally possible, that the vinegar was offered to Jesus twice. (See Chapter XXIII, note 22). The facts were probably these: as may be borne out by the language used by Matthew and Mark. After Christ's first cry, it seems that some one, probably a soldier, hastened to get the sponge full of vinegar; and then he went about to give it to Jesus. But the others, in their anxiety about seeing Elijah, stopped this man in the act of giving the vinegar. He quickly caught the suggestion, and stopped, as they had suggested. Then followed the round of mutual exhortation to silence, while the people quietly waited the issue of their fearful expectation.

There is little doubt as to what had already happened in the minds of those who had raised this question about Elijah. In the very last verses of the Old Testament Scriptures, God had said,

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the Prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful Day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."⁹

By the fearful combination of the darkness and the earthquake, God had made a "great and dreadful day" of this Crucifixion Day, on which the Son of God was dying on the Cross. By this supernatural means God had revived in the minds of men this ancient prophecy, which was familiar to practically all of the Jews. Thus God had caused men to think, with anxious fear, of an impending doom for their guilt on this occasion. The very fact that they misunderstood *Eli, Eli*, for the calling of Elijah, shows clearly, by the mental law of apperception, that the thought of the Jews was already filled with the terror of this prophecy. They fearfully expected that Elijah would come: hence their anxiety to see what would happen. They also feared that God would "smite the earth with a curse."

Turning again to the dying Savior, one naturally inquires, What was the meaning of His Cry of Forsaken, as heard from the Cross? What caused this cry? What did the dying Christ mean by this cry? It must be remembered that this cry was fore-ordained as a part of the divine program of the Crucifixion.¹⁰ Possibly the audible utterance was immediately called forth by some turn in the excruciating physical pain incident to crucifixion, which was here intensified by the effects of the earthquake. The common thought is that this cry was caused by a separation between the Father and His dying Son on the Cross. This withdrawal of the Father's Presence is supposed to have been symbolized by the darkness. This view is held to be supported by the fact that the cry came at the close of the period of darkness. This view would make the cry due to a separation between the Father and the Son, in the latter's full Divine-Human Personality.

⁹See *Malachi* 4:5-6.

¹⁰See Note 7 above, which gives a reference to the ancient prophecy concerning this event.

But there is a more imposing conception of the cause of this *Cry of Forsaken*. It is the thought that this cry arose from the mental and spiritual anguish of Christ's Human Nature, standing alone for a time under the burden of the world's sin. As here understood, this cry arose from the effect of the mysterious and inscrutable separation, which somewhere did take place, between the Divine Nature and the Human Nature of Christ, enabling Him to die.

When His Human Nature was thus "forsaken," it stood alone, unsupported by the Divine. The burden of the world's sin fell then, with crushing weight, upon His Human Nature. Such anguish as He then gave utterance to was inevitable. It was the anguish of His Human Spirit, while He stood alone on the verge of death as a Sin-Offering for the world. In that moment He came the nearest possible to a literal making of His Soul an offering for sin.¹¹

That was the moment of supreme agony, when Jesus paid the full price of redemption. After that, it only remained for Him

to see that one more unique prophecy was fulfilled, and then to close out His life in voluntary death. That the full limit of suffering had been reached, and passed, John showed plainly when he placed the *Cry of*

Thirst, which was a cry of physical suffering, after the cry of mental and spiritual anguish already described.

"After this," John wrote, with careful reference to the order of events at this point—"After this Jesus, knowing that all things are now finished, that the Scripture might be accomplished, saith,

I THIRST.

There was set a vessel full of vinegar: so they put a sponge full of vinegar upon hyssop, and brought to His mouth."¹²

¹¹See *Isaiah* 53:10. This interpretation of the *Cry of Forsaken* is in keeping with the correct rendering of the verb *forsake* in this cry. It should be translated "*Why didst Thou forsake Me?*" It was so translated in the footnote to this verse in both *Matthew* and *Mark*, in the American Revision. The verb is aorist in form, and refers to a definite act at some point of time in the past.

Again, this view is in agreement with the wording of Christ's several prayers which He prayed while on the Cross. Previous to this cry, Jesus had prayed, "Father, forgive them." Soon after this cry, Jesus prayed, "Father, into Thy hands, etc." But in this cry, Jesus prayed, "My God, My God, why didst Thou forsake Me?" Christ did not here pray to His Father as having forsaken His Son, but to essential *Deity*. Finally, this conception of the cry and its cause is in harmony with the truth of salvation, as wrought out in the death of Christ, and also with what is said of Christ up to His death at this time. He was a Divine-Human Savior. In His Human Nature, He died on the Cross. But the *will to die* was of His Divine Nature, which

This *Cry of Thirst* has had a multiplied significance. To those who stood near the Cross and heard the cry, it expressed a kind of suffering, and a depth of suffering, which human pity could not resist. They therefore gave Him vinegar to ease His pain. To those who now, with faith and love, read these records, this cry signifies the Human Nature of Christ, Who took man's place before the broken law of God, and in His Human Nature died, the Just for the unjust, that those who believe in Him might be saved.

But to the mind of the Apostle John, who has fully recorded this incident, this Cry was significant in two ways. In the one word *thirst*, he seemed to hear expressed the sum of all physical suffering, the total agony of a crucifixion. In the fact of this call for drink, John saw clearly the fulfilment of an ancient prophecy.¹² And in this fulfilment, John saw a third deeper significance of the whole incident: namely, the necessary consistency of the Eternal Son of God, Who once had spoken in prophecy, and now must fulfil in action the thing once prophesied.

Hence John has suggested that there was here a conscious sovereign purpose in the Mind of Jesus to leave no detail, however small, unfulfilled in His own divinely appointed and previously described program of suffering. Therefore John has represented Jesus as deliberately directing the fulfilment of this particular detail of prophecy. "Jesus, knowing that all things are now finished," which evidently means all other items in the program of suffering, called for a drink, so that this last incidental prophecy might also be fulfilled. That was apparently the definite meaning of John's profound observation on this *Cry of Thirst*.

2. *The Two Voices of Triumph.* There were yet the two voices of triumph, heard from the Cross of Christ. The one was recorded by John. The other was recorded by Luke, and suggested also by Matthew and Mark. The one was a sort of Farewell to the world. The other was somewhat like a greeting of Christ's Spirit upon His return to Heaven.

hovered, in sovereign superintendence, over this death scene until the very last utterance of Christ in triumphant death.

¹²See *Psalm* 69:21; also above, Chapters XXIII, note 22; XXIV, note 1; and XXV, note 8.) This was the third time that vinegar was offered to Jesus during the Crucifixion. The hyssop used was probably the caper plant, a vine producing stems three or four feet in length. The drink offered to Jesus at this time was an exhilarating draught, and not the stupefying one first offered to Him. This He could drink: that He could not drink.

¹³The long physical sufferings of Jesus would create a thirst. The contortions from spiritual anguish would cause a burning fever. But John saw a deeper conscious purpose of Christ in this *Cry of Thirst*, which fulfilled the prophecy in *Psalm* 69:21.

The first voice of triumph was related to Christ's work as Savior of the world. This statement, as heard from the Cross, anticipated the death of Christ, and also included it. This was an expression of gratification that all of His obligations as a party to the Covenant of Redemption,¹⁴ which He had made with His Father in Heaven, had so far been perfectly fulfilled. Hence, in recognition of this perfect accomplishment, and in calm sincerity, Christ said aloud,

IT IS FINISHED.

These three words were Christ's final report of His Life-Work to His Father. The details of that work were well known to them both. This report therefore needed only a simple announcement of its completion. What Christ came to do was done.¹⁵

All the foundations for the provisions of divine grace were thus fulfilled in Christ. The plans of God were thus worked out. The prophecies to ancient Israel were thus fulfilled. The Messianic promises of God were thus realized in the Life-Work of His Son, Whom He had sent into the world to live and die for the world.

All righteousness, as respects both the penalty of law and obedience to law, was thus completed in Jesus Christ, Who both lived and died under the law of God, accomplishing a perfected obedience. The world's debt of sin and guilt was paid. All types and symbols of the old covenant with Israel were fulfilled in Him. "The mighty work, undertaken by Him Who would realize the expectations of the oldest prophets and the unconscious prophecies of heathendom, was done." The whole Law, and the Prophets, and the ceremonial foreshadowings were realized and glorified in Him.

Death itself was His glory; for in it was a finished work, the basis of a completed triumph. Sin is under an eternal curse; and the full measure of that curse is seen only in the Death of Christ. But God has reconciled the world unto Himself by the Death of His Son, by laying the curse of sin upon Him, Who knew no sin. In Him was fulfilled every ancient hope held out to the world of a substitute for man before the Judgment Throne of God. Christ was that Substitute, the Lamb of God Who takes

¹⁴See Chapter XX, Note 6.

¹⁵Compare *Luke* 2:34-35; *John* 17:1-4; *2. Corinthians* 5:21; *1. Peter* 1:18-19; *1. John* 2:2, and 3:5; and many other such statements of His work as Savior.

away the sin of the world. On this Crucifixion Day, "Christ our Passover (was) sacrificed for us."

The Life-Work of Jesus Christ thus far was done. In this first voice of triumph, Christ therefore reported this fact to His Father. The work of Christ was finished. All was ready for His Death, that completing Fact, already anticipated in the Mind of Christ, to which immediately He now turns His final attention.

The last voice from the Cross was that in which the Lord Jesus, at the time of His Death, committed His Spirit to His Father in Heaven. Christ died at three o'clock in the afternoon, the time at which the Paschal Lamb was slain. It is claimed that Christ's heart was literally broken, being ruptured by the intense agony through which He had passed while hanging on the Cross. His last words, however, take the mind entirely away from any thought of a physical cause in His death.

Matthew and Mark have recorded that Jesus cried again with a loud voice. Perhaps this was a supernatural voice, entirely independent of any idea of a waning physical strength in Jesus. Such a voice at the time of death, according to the thought of some, would of itself have proved Jesus Christ to be Divine. Luke, seeming to add the quoted words to this outcry of the Lord, has given the matter in the following statement. "And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, He said,

FATHER, INTO THY HANDS
I COMMEND MY SPIRIT.

And having said this, He gave up the Ghost." John stated that Jesus bowed His head; and all the Gospel writers agree that Jesus "gave up His Spirit." These statements constitute the simple record of the Death of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is the most important event in the history of the world.

The record is simple. But the Death itself was the triumph of sovereign self-surrender. Jesus Christ had always said that His Death was appointed to be a sovereign act of His own free will.¹⁶ This truth all the sacred historians confirm, in saying that He "yielded up His Spirit." The verb here used means *to dismiss His Spirit*, as if the

2. Christ's
Committing of His
Spirit to the Father
Luke 23:46
Cf. Matt. 27:50
Mark 15:37
John 19:30b

(1) Cry of Christ's
Expiring Spirit

(2) Death a
Triumph of
Sovereign
Self-Surrender

¹⁶John 10:17-18.

hovering Divine Nature in Jesus, even if it were isolated, still supervised and controlled this last act of sublime self-surrender. Christ *gave His* life a ransom for many. In so doing, He executed the love of His Father, and also manifested His own love for a lost world. This sublimest expression of Divine love, the writers of the Gospel records have stated as a fact, and then left it, in simple grandeur, unemphasized, unadorned.¹⁷

(B) The Significant Events Attending the Death of Christ.

The Death of Christ was the unique death of all history. With that event all creation seems to have shown a mysterious sympathy. There were fear-inspiring portents in the physical world. There was a moral awakening in the hearts of men. There was a net-work of immediate human testimony woven about this great central event of Christ's Death. All of these facts combine into a conclusive argument that the world, in those dark hours, was under the firm control of the Supernatural. The effects thus produced may be classified as physical effects, moral effects, and intellectual effects; and as such, they will be considered in the following outlines.

1. *The Physical Effects about the Death of Christ.* The physical effects that accompanied the Death of Christ, in addition to the darkness, were three in number. These three events were the rending of the Veil of the Temple, the Earthquake, and the opening of the tombs. These events, together with the darkness itself, contributed greatly to the terror of that great and dreadful day of the Lord. These phenomena in the external world were briefly mentioned by Mark and Luke, but were described in great detail by

¹⁷In later years, the Apostles and other New Testament writers greatly magnified the Crucifixion and the Death of Christ. But this also is true even of them: never did any one of them ever speak a word of resentment, in the Gospel records, or in *The Acts*, or in the *Epistles*, or elsewhere against the maltreatment and the scorn to which Jesus had been subjected. The Apostles and others did speak, directly and fearlessly, of the ignorance and the sin of the Jewish rulers in their persecuting unto death the Lord Jesus Christ. The Apostles always magnified the Cross of Christ, and gloried in it. (*1. Corinthians* 2:2; *Galatians* 6:14; *Philippians* 3:7-21.) Moreover, they always spoke to the enemies of Christ with a magnetic sympathy that was intended to draw them, with penitence and hope, to the Cross itself. (See *Acts* 2:22-39; 3:12-26; 4:5-30; 5:29-42; and 7:51-53, where Stephen was, of course, stopped by violence before he had made the sympathetic appeal toward which his entire discourse was definitely pointing.)

When one, with open mind, surveys the original Plan of God for the salvation of the world; the Divine program, laid out in Prophecy, for the Birth, the life-work,

Matthew, whose Gospel narrative was considerably earlier than those of the other writers. The Darkness has been studied already, in the first part of this chapter. The other phenomena will now be analyzed.

The first of these three significant events in the physical world that accompanied the Lord's Death was probably the rending of the Veil in the Temple. The main interests in this event center in the facts as they occurred, in the general structure of the Temple as related to this Veil that was rent, and in the symbolical meaning of this rending of the Veil from top to bottom, as was then done.

**1. Veil of Temple
Rent from Top to
Bottom**
Matthew 27:51
Mark 15:38
Luke 23:45

Matthew and Mark have briefly mentioned this event, using the same words: "And behold, the Veil of the Temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom." Luke agreed in stating that "the Veil of the Temple was rent in the midst." This event occurred during the darkness. Luke has placed it before the death of Christ; while Matthew and Mark have apparently suggested that it happened before, and was therefore independent of, the Earthquake. Both of these events were clearly considered as supernatural; and the order here suggested, as seen below, would seem best to fit into the underlying logical relations of the two extraordinary events.

An understanding of this Rent Veil, and of what it symbolized, calls for a knowledge of some facts about the ancient Tabernacle, the Temple, and the two Veils in each of these sacred buildings. The Temple was in the form of a long rectangular room, which was separated into compartments by means of the curtains which were suspended near the front end, and more than half way toward the rear end, of this rectangular room. The one near the front, called the outer curtain, separated the vestibule, or outer court, from the Holy Place within. The second Veil, which was farther back, separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies, or Most Holy Place, as it was variously called.

and the Death of Christ; the calm and assured sovereignty in which He carried out every detail of that divine plan and program; and the exalted and more-than-human forbearance in the inspired records of His sufferings and His Death, and in the reflections made thereon in the later Scriptures,—when one has carefully surveyed it all, he necessarily finds an exalted purpose and an underlying consistency which are both divine and powerfully convincing. The open mind must conclude that these things are verily the thoughts and the works of God, and of the Son of God, and of the Divine Spirit of God.

This Inner Veil was the one spoken of in the Gospels as rent from the top to the bottom at the time of Christ's Death. This

a. Inner Veil of the Temple

Inner Veil of the Temple was of very rich materials, about sixty feet high, and very costly. Its purpose was to protect the Most Holy Place, which was God's Dwelling Place among the people. Into the vestibule, or outer court, any person was free to go. Into the Holy Place, the common priests were free to enter. But beyond this Inner Veil, into the Holy of Holies, where God dwelled, none but the High Priest was allowed to enter; and he could do so only once a year, at the Great Day of Atonement.¹⁸ This limitation of Israel's approach to God symbolized and signified that their reconciliation with Him was not perfect until it was fulfilled in the Death of Jesus Christ.

This arrangement of the veils in the Temple was a duplication, on a larger scale, of the original arrangement in the Tabernacle;

b. Inner Veil of the Tabernacle

and the full meaning of this Rent Veil at the Death of Christ harks back to the original order of God respecting the Tabernacle.¹⁹

The Tabernacle was a smaller movable structure, in outline much like the later Temple. There was an outer court, a Holy Place, and a Most Holy Place, separated by an Outer and an Inner Veil, as described above in the case of the Temple.

The Tabernacle was God's House, and the Holy of Holies, shut off by the Inner Curtain, was His particular dwelling place. Within this Most Holy Place in the Tabernacle was the Ark of the Covenant. On the top of this Ark, as its covering, was the Mercy Seat. This could be approached by none except the High Priest, when he came once a year with the blood of the Atoning Sacrifice for the people. None but he could enter beyond the Inner Veil. This he could do only with the sacrifice of blood. This he must do repeatedly for the sins of the people.

Within this Ark of the Covenant there were three things.²⁰ These were Aaron's Rod, symbolizing God's power; a Pot of Manna, symbolizing God's sustaining grace; and the Book of the Law, which was God's guide book of truth and life for the people. All of these things were kept in the Most Holy Place, shut off from the people by the Inner Veil of the Tabernacle. All of these

¹⁸For the manner of observing this Great Day of Atonement, see *Leviticus* 16:1-34; 23:26-32; and *Numbers* 29:7-11.

¹⁹For the making of the Tabernacle, see *Exodus* 25 to 40.

²⁰For the contents of the Ark of the Covenant, see *Exodus* 25:16, 21; *Hebrews* 9:4; *Exodus* 16:33-34; *Numbers* 17:10; and *Deuteronomy* 31:26. See also *Numbers* 14:43-44; and *1 Kings* 8:1-6. This Ark is supposed to have been lost during the Captivity, after it was carried away by King Nebuchadnezzar.

things, including the Tabernacle itself, were types and symbols, illustrative of God's eventual relations with His people through the Atoning Sacrifice and the indwelling Spirit of Jesus Christ. The whole arrangement of the Tabernacle, and of its reproduction in the Temple, symbolized the imperfect approach which Israel had to God, Who dwelt beyond the Inner Veil. It symbolized also the imperfect realization which the people then had of God's power, and grace, and truth: things which the world could not fully realize until these types and symbols were translated into their full spiritual significance in Jesus Christ, Who was and is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life."

The Old Order, with its types and symbols, pointed to the coming of Christ, in Whom was the fullness and the perfection of all that God had thus promised to the world.

(3) Meaning of the Rent Veil of the Temple

Jesus Christ was Himself the great Atoning Sacrifice, the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world. His "precious blood," shed on the Cross for the remission of sins, was sufficient for all, and good for all time. It was the basis of a perfect, and the completed Atonement. The Rent Veil at the Death of Christ had therefore a double significance. To the world at large that meaning was gracious. To the rejecting Jews it was judicial.

To the lost world the Rent Veil means hope. "But Christ being come an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect Tabernacle, not made with hands, but by His Own blood, He entered in once into the Holy of Holies, having obtained eternal redemption for us." In doing the will of God, Christ "taketh away the first (types, etc.) that He may establish the second (fulfilment)." By so doing, He made it possible for men to be "sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." And Christ, "after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool."²¹ The Blood of Christ is effectual unto victory: for "the Blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleaneth us from all sin." "It is God that justifieth." "It is Christ that died, . . . (and) is risen again, . . . (and) maketh intercession for us."

²¹The Writer of Hebrews continues his exhortation thus: "Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the Holiest by the Blood of Jesus, by a new and living Way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His Flesh; and having an High Priest over the House of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, . . . let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering." *Hebrews* 10:19-23. See *Romans* 8:1, 28-34; also Christ's Prayer in *John* 17.

The Death of Christ made an Atonement, and gave the Hope of Life to the world. By His Death Christ provided for a complete reconciliation between God and Man. By His Death Christ opened the Way through which men, by faith and prayer in His Name, may enter into the Most Holy Presence of God. This perfected Way of Approach to God was symbolized by the complete rent in the Veil of the Temple from top to bottom.

By His Death Christ made accessible and attractive to all the world of believers in Him all that was symbolically secluded behind the Inner Veil of the Tabernacle, or the Temple. Christ fulfilled the Jewish types and repeated ceremonies. He simplified the way of life for all the world, by offering Himself as an Atonement once for all. He thus provided for direct fellowship with God, through an indwelling Spirit. He transferred the *Shekinah*, from the Mercy Seat within the Tabernacle, to a throne in the human heart. Christ was Himself a perfect Book of the Law, a complete unfolding of all that God had ever spoken in covenanted mercies to Israel, and to the world. Christ brought forth to every life the possible fullness of God's providential authority and power, which makes all things work together for good to them that love God.

Through His Death, Resurrection, and re-enthronement, Christ has become the Sovereign Mediator of God's providing grace, securing all things to them who seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. Through His Atonement, made for all, and accepted and utilized by faith, Christ has made every believer a high priest for intercession, and has authorized and urged every disciple to come boldly in prayer to the Throne of Mercy and Grace. Christ has thus become the Mediator of a New Covenant of Grace, providing for all believers the privileges of direct relations with God through Jesus Christ. The Veil was rent, so that all the world might enter in. Salvation is now open freely to all men in all the world. That is the meaning of the Rent Veil as seen on its gracious side.

But to the Jews who rejected Christ, He was a Stumblingstone and Rock of Offence, which God had laid in Sion. Well may the

**b. Christ a
Stumbling-Stone to
the Jews**
Cf. Romans 9, 10
and 11

Rent Veil have been recognized from the first as a token of divine judgment. Probably it was first seen by some priest who hurried, after the prolonged darkness, to offer the evening sacrifice, which began about three o'clock. Terrified by the earthquake and other unusual happenings of this great day, he came trembling to the

Temple, and found the Inner Veil thus rent in the midst. Well might he have exclaimed, *Ichabod!* The Glory had departed from Israel!

This was a fearful sign. The once sacred religion of the Jews was now sacred no more, as it had been. Why should God longer desire a secret and sacred dwelling place in their midst, when they had renounced their Messianic Hopes, and had sold themselves to Caesar! The judicial significance of this Rent Veil is thus evident. God's first stroke of wrath had already fallen upon His once Chosen People; and that stroke had thus fallen upon their worn-out, God-forsaking, and Spirit-opposing religion.

This sign, from this judicial point of view, was significantly private to the priests. God had forsaken them, and had thus effectually announced that fact. The souls even of those priests must have been startled with fear, when they, emerging from the terrors of the darkness and the earthquake, hurried to their sacrificial altars, only to learn there that God no longer regarded them as peculiarly His people.

The second sign on this solemn occasion was not private, as the first one had been. This sign was like a public proclamation

**2. Earthquake in
the Darkness
Matthew 27:51**

to all the world. It was the awful earthquake in the darkness. This second wonder in the physical world, possibly universal in extent, smote the world with terror, and brought the people into fear and silence while the Lord Jesus approached the hour of His death on the Cross.

This earthquake is a well attested fact of history.²² The occurrence was mentioned, with convincing simplicity, by Matthew in his record of the Gospel. However, he merely mentioned it as a fact, as if he were intending to give only a passing notice to another of those wonders of the natural world which were known of a certainty to have accompanied the Crucifixion of Jesus. In a few words, Matthew said, "And the earth did quake: and the rocks were rent; and the tombs were opened." By placing this event after his account of the Rent Veil, Matthew has strongly suggested that the two events were entirely separated one from the other.

²²Phlegon, as quoted by Julius Africanus, in his *Chronographia*, testified to this earthquake. A passage, now lost in the original, from the *Chronicon* of Eusebius, but preserved by Jerome in an Armenian version, testifies to the same event. St. Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem, testifies also to this event, and the rending of the rocks, mentioning especially that he had often seen the fissures caused thereby in Golgotha.

The meaning of the earthquake, like that of the darkness, was also multiple. There is reason for the suggestion, especially in the light of certain other Scriptures,²³ that this trembling of the earth was as a sympathetic response of Nature to the sufferings of her dying Lord. It is also proper to think of this event as a divine means of stopping at once the scoffing of the Jews against the Son of God. God did thus "still the enemy and the avenger." Certainly the solemn and awful sensations of an earthquake in the darkness, as the writer of these words knows from personal experience, is an effective suggestion that the lives of men are in the hands of God.

But there was a deeper sense in which this earthquake was a defense of the dying Son of God. In all of His life-work, as suggested several times already, Christ never left an error unchallenged, and uncorrected. Now that He was dying, the Father in Heaven would not leave His Son to suffer from a mistaken notion in the minds of men as to the manner of His death. The Father would not allow this error to stand even in the minds of Christ's enemies.

The case was this. The enemies of Christ were not taking His life, as they supposed. They could not do that, except as He yielded Himself to them. Out of infinite love for a lost world, God *gave* His Son. In response to the divine plan and call of love, Christ *came to give His life* a ransom for many. Christ said that He would, of His own sovereign power, *lay down His life* for His Christian fold. He did at the last *dismiss* His own spirit to His Father. These are the facts. God was here terrifying the world into a solemn recognition of that divine sovereignty which was accomplishing these deeds on the Cross. Thus God set a correction to the error of Christ's enemies. Thus God also turned the scorn of the scorers back upon themselves. The rent veil was a solemn warning to the Jewish leaders. The earthquake was a solemnizing evangel of Christ to all the people.²⁴ The earthquake was God's certain way of defending His dying Son.

There was a third physical phenomenon at that time. It was the opening of the tombs, and the liberation of the spirits of the dead. Matthew has recorded this strange occurrence as fol-

²³Genesis 3:17; Jeremiah 12:4-11; Luke 19:40; Romans 8:19-23; 2. Peter 3:10-14. In all of these passages there is strongly suggested a moral sympathy between things spiritual and the external physical world.

²⁴Cf. John 3:16; Mark 10:45; John 10:17-18; Luke 23:46; Psalm 2:4-6, 9-12, and many like passages.

lows: "And the tombs were opened; and many bodies of the saints that had fallen asleep were raised; and coming forth out of

3. **Spirits of the
Dead Liberated
from Their Tombs**
Matthew 27:52-53

the tombs after His Resurrection they entered into the Holy City and appeared unto many."

This was apparently Matthew's literal statement of a literal fact, or set of facts.

But what exactly were the facts thus set forth? That question has been much debated. Some have associated the meaning here with that in *First Peter* 3:18-20. But it would seem sufficient to quote, with approval, the following statement:

"The whole matter is mysterious and beyond human ken; but we may well believe that at this great crisis the Lord, Who is the Resurrection and the Life, willed to exemplify His victory over death, and to make manifest the resurrection of the body, and this He did by releasing some saintly souls from Hades (merely the abode of the dead), and clothing them with the forms in which they had formerly lived, and permitting them to show themselves thus to those who knew and loved them. Of the future life of these resuscitated saints we know nothing, and will not presumptuously venture to inquire. When they have demonstrated that the sting was now taken from death, that the power of the grave was broken, that men shall rise again with their bodies and be known and recognized, they pass out of sight into the unseen world, and we can follow them no further."

2. *The Moral Effects before the Cross of Christ.* The moral effects before the Cross of Christ were of two kinds, each being a type of conviction as to the truth of the Lord Jesus. These convictions were wrought in the minds and hearts of the common people of the Jews, and of the Roman Centurion and his soldiers. In these two groups, the Jew and the Gentile, the whole world was represented on this occasion, and was awed into conviction, and made responsive to the power and majesty and truth of the dying Savior on the Cross.

**Christ Crucified, the
Power and the
Wisdom of God**
Matthew 27:54
Mark 15:39
Luke 23:47-48

The first moral effect of the occasion was evident in the common people of the Jews. The masses of the common people thus affected included both of the sub-groups then present. Naturally the moral effects of the occasion would be felt by the large silent group of serious minded "people," as Luke describes them, who "stood beholding" the things that were hap-

1. **Moral Conviction
of the Common
People**

pening. But at least a measure of this moral conviction fell also upon the scoffers among the common people, who had followed the earlier suggestions of the rulers and jeered at the dying Savior.

These moral convictions of the people were according to prophecy. Luke, in the graphic records of his Gospel of universal response, has made this fact very clear. He wrote the facts in these words: "And all the multitudes that came together to this sight, when they beheld the things that were done, returned smiting their breasts." These

**(1) Facts as
Prophesied
Luke 23:48
Zechariah 12:10**

facts were a literal fulfillment of the following ancient description of these melancholy events, which the Lord gave to the world through the Prophet Zechariah: "And they shall look upon Me Whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his first born."

These sorrowful convictions in the hearts of the more serious people were perfectly natural: for their hearts were open to the truth. But the solemn thoughts that took hold of the jeering rabble represented a recoil of error and of evil that was tragic and

**(2) Recoil of Error
and Evil**

pathetic. The common people, as a rule, had always been responsive to Christ. This fact the rulers of the Jews knew very well; and they had long since recognized that the people were a force to be reckoned with in their own plans against the Lord Jesus Christ.²⁵

Knowing this fact, the chief priests, and scribes, and elders of the people, during the Trial and Crucifixion of Jesus, had taken an advantage of the people by organizing certain of them into a mob, and by propagating this mob spirit. Under the impetus of this blinding influence, the people thus led had clamored for the crucifixion of Christ, and had added insult to His agony by jeering at Him on the Cross. But the people in doing these things were misled by their rulers. When therefore the terrifying hand of God took hold of the situation, as seen in the darkness and in the earthquake, the deluded people were suddenly awakened to feel the dreadful enormity of their sin. The moral recoil in the people was complete. Their silent fear became the exact opposite of their previous frenzied jeering at Christ on the Cross.

²⁵For previous account of this fact, taken notice of by the rulers of the Jews, see the Index, under "Common People."

A still more explicit moral effect of the Cross was the conviction which arose in the minds of the Roman Centurion and of his soldiers. They were officially in charge of the Crucifixion, and had carefully watched all the happenings of that eventful day. The convictions which they expressed were therefore of very great importance, the more so in view of the Gentile character of those who were so deeply affected by these events.

2. Confession of
Truth by the
Romans
Matthew 27:54
Mark 15:39
Luke 23:47

There seem, in fact, to have been two degrees, if not indeed two separate kinds, of moral effect wrought by the events of this great day in the Gentile minds of the Centurion and his soldiers. The first was personal, and had reference to themselves. This was shared alike by all the Romans. The second was objective, and had reference to the personality of the Lord Jesus. This latter effect, as suggested by Mark and Luke, may have been an advanced conviction to which the Centurion alone had attained.

The first effect was one of fear. The entire Roman group were smitten with a dread of divine judgment upon themselves.

a. Fear of Divine
Judgment

Matthew has made the following record of this fear. "Now the Centurion, and they that were with him watching Jesus, when they saw the earthquake and the things that were done, feared exceedingly, saying, 'Truly this was the Son of God!'" Mark and Luke, however, without any necessary contradiction of Matthew's statement, have attributed this formal confession concerning Christ to the Centurion alone. Probably, as will appear below, it was his more definite conviction which found expression in these words quoted by Matthew.

These official Roman executioners had seen the darkness, the earthquake, the rending of the rocks, and the divine meekness of the Suffering Savior. They had heard His last words, and His loud cry. They had marked His patient death. By these things the Romans were deeply impressed with awe and fear. Seeing all these things, they "feared exceedingly." They were made to feel that Jesus Christ, dying thus amid such wonders, must be more than human. They had good reason to fear some expression of divine wrath against themselves for their own part in this crucifixion of One in Whom the Supernatural Powers had seemed to show an obviously active interest.

Beyond this personal fear of an impending judgment, there was a conviction, at least in the mind of the Centurion, concerning

b. Belief in the Son of God

the Lord Jesus Christ. From the many favorable references in the New Testament Scriptures to the Roman Centurions,²⁰ it may be inferred that this Centurion was also an open-minded man. He had been an eye-witness to all that had happened to Jesus on that day. Possibly he had heard the private examination of Jesus before Pilate, and all that Jesus had spoken since leaving the Roman Court at the early hour that morning. The Centurion's impressions of Jesus had doubtless grown in quality and clearness throughout the day, and had been ripened into definite conviction when he saw the majestic manner in which the Lord was dying on the Cross. As a result of this conviction, the Centurion exclaimed, as variously quoted by Matthew, Mark, and Luke:

"Truly This Was the Son of God!"

"Truly This Man was the Son of God!"

"Certainly This Was a Righteous Man!"

What did the Centurion mean by this confession? The differences in his words, as quoted above, are full of interest. Only a little analysis will show that the Centurion probably said all that is stated by all the writers. Probably his full statement was something like this: "Certainly this was a righteous Man; and truly this Man was the Son of God!" Rightly conceived, this strong testimony to the Lord Jesus has two meanings: that which the Centurion meant, and that which God meant providentially in this confession.

What did the Centurion mean? How much did he mean? He may have seen into the true depths of Christ's Divine-Human

a. Centurion's Meaning in This Confession

Personality. Why not? He was watching Christ die on the Cross. That was a marvel, rising above mere human experience. It is even probable that this Centurion had heard the marvelous words of Jesus to Pilate. Certainly the pause in the procession to the Cross on that morning, when Jesus had prophesied so solemnly to the women about the future of their City and of their Race, would have attracted the mind of this Centurion to the possible Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Twice that day the Centurion had heard Jesus speak in prayer,

²⁰Compare *Luke* 7:2, and the discussion of this message on page 238 above. See also *Luke* 23:47; *Acts* 10:1; 22:26; 27:1, 43; and 28:16.

and each time in a tone of divine familiarity with His Father in Heaven. Again, the Centurion had heard Jesus cry out from the Cross concerning a severed relation with God that certainly meant more than ordinary human fellowship with God. Still further, this Centurion had doubtless witnessed Christ's exercise of His Divine function as Savior, when He gave life and assurance to the repentant robber on the cross.

There is no doubt also that this Centurion had seen and felt the Divine Sovereignty of the Son of God through all the stages of the Crucifixion; for, as Mark has stated, it was the sovereign manner in which Christ dismissed His own Spirit in death that gave such profound final conviction to the Centurion, and caused him to give public expression to his convictions concerning the Lord Jesus. In view of these facts, there is no reason to doubt that the Centurion meant, in his confession, to proclaim, as best he could, his full confidence in the Divine-Human Personality of the Son of God.²⁷

Besides this meaning of the Centurion, there was also an obvious providential meaning and purpose in this remarkable testimony. That purpose inheres in these facts. The Centurion did recognize Jesus as *a righteous Man*. The Centurion did formally declare that Jesus was *the Son of God*. Suppose that the Centurion meant "Son of God" only in the Roman sense of an exalted moral hero. Suppose he meant it only in the figurative sense, common then and now. Suppose that he did speak more and wiser than he really knew. Even these qualifications would not necessarily affect the providential purpose in this confession of the Centurion respecting the Son of God.

The primary providential fact would still remain. This Centurion had spoken the essential truth. He had stated the basic and triumphant *fact* of Christ's personality and life-work. That was apparently one purpose at least of God in the words of the Centurion at this time. Under great conviction the Roman Officer had again spoken the truth, and spoken it so that all the world could hear his testimony.

God had providentially used Pilate's action, whatever his motives, to enthrone Christ on the Cross. In the same way God

²⁷Tradition has identified this Centurion with Longinus, who was led, as the story goes, by witnessing what happened at the Crucifixion of Christ, to a firm faith in Christ as the Son of God. According to this report, this Centurion became a messenger of the Risen Lord, and died, in Cappadocia, as a martyr to the cause of Christ. Chrysostom has recited, with confidence, this common report concerning the Centurion.

was here using the confession of this Roman Centurion, whatever his confession may have meant to himself, to contradict the charge of blasphemy against the Son of God, and to proclaim the Divinity of that Son of God before all the world. It will be observed that these words of the Centurion are the last recorded words that were spoken at the Cross of the dying Savior. Certainly God must have had a definite providential purpose in the fact that the last recorded words spoken before the Cross of Christ were these four words,

THE SON OF GOD.

3. *The Intellectual Effects in Support of the Cross of Christ.*
There remain yet two facts to be analyzed. These are in the

Christ Died
According to the
Scriptures
Matthew 27:55-56
Mark 15:40-41
Luke 23:49
John 19:31-37

nature of intellectual effects in support of the Death of Christ. The Lord Jesus has not left Himself without a testimony as to the fact of His own death on the Cross. The first of these two facts is concerned with the concourse of sympathetic witnesses who saw the Crucifixion and the Death of Christ. The other fact deals with the official witness

and testimony that Jesus did actually die on the Cross.

The fact of the sympathetic witnesses is recorded by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, in the marginal references given above. Mark's record is as follows: "And there were also women beholding Him from afar: among whom were both Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joses, and Salome; who, when He was in Galilee, followed Him, and ministered unto Him;²⁸ and many other women which came up with Him unto Jerusalem."

Mary, the Mother of Jesus, it will be noted, was not mentioned as present at this time. She had been committed by Jesus to the Apostle John, and sent away with him, before the darkness had come upon the world.²⁹ The persons here named, and many others doubtless, for Luke spoke in this connection of "all His acquaintance," had stood by the Cross since the morning hour. With love and faith, with courage and wonder, they had witnessed all of the events described in the preceding pages, and doubtless many more unrecorded by the sacred historians. Probably the

²⁸See *Luke* 8:1-3, and Chapter XI, page 240 above.

²⁹See Chapter XXIV, pages 605-607 above.

Apostles were also somewhere in that multitude of silent witnesses. If they were, and surely they were present, there is no wonder that these devout persons, who were ever responsive to the Spirit-taught significance of these wonders of Christ's Death, went forth later, with an unshakable faith, to live and to die when necessary for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ actually died on the Cross. The official witnesses to this fact are of two separate and independent kinds. The one

**2. Official Witnesses
to the Death of
Christ**

was the group of Roman soldiers, who were officially appointed for that purpose. The other was the Apostle John, an eye-witness of these happenings, who has left an authoritative record of his testimony. The fact of Christ's death was a necessary antecedent to the fact of His Resurrection. As to the fact of His death, the official witnesses here considered leave no place for a doubt or question.

The fact that Christ actually died on the Cross was fully and officially attested first by the Roman soldiers, who were sent to investigate that very fact. There was grim irony for the rulers of the Jews in the fact that they were the prime movers, outwardly speaking, of this investigation. They desired to have the bodies of those crucified removed

**(1) Official
Testimony of the
Roman Soldiers
John 19:31-34**

from their crosses before the coming of the great Sabbath that was drawing near. The Jews therefore went and asked Pilate to hasten the deaths of those who were crucified, and then to remove their bodies. The result of that request was the double official testimony to the important fact of Christ's death: a testimony that will continue to support the faith of the world until the end of time.

The investigation by the Roman soldiers was complete. Pilate granted the request of the Jews. He ordered the soldiers to

**a. Investigation
by the Soldiers**

break the legs of those who had been crucified, as was the cruel Roman custom, in order to hasten the deaths of those thus executed. This the soldiers began to do, in compliance with the orders of Pilate. Probably two of the soldiers broke the legs of the one of the crucified robbers, while the other two soldiers broke the legs of the other robber. If that were done, then the four soldiers would come together before the Cross of Christ, thus rendering their testimony stronger by agreement of the greater number.⁸⁰

⁸⁰Doubtless the soldiers had two reasons for dealing with the robbers before coming to the Cross of Christ. First, there was an equal division of labor in this procedure

But they found that Jesus was already dead. Being assured of this fact, the soldiers refrained from breaking His legs, as they had broken the legs of the robbers. But the fear of Roman authority was greater, in one of them at least, than was the religious fear that had been awakened by the supernatural events of the day. That soldier, therefore, in order to make certain that Jesus was actually dead, or soon would be so, thrust a spear into the Lord's side, with results that confirmed the fact of His death.³¹

The circumstances render the testimony of these soldiers thoroughly reliable. They were acting under the express orders of the Roman Governor. To fail in their obedience meant certain death. They were acting under the religious fear that the day of wonders had inspired in their hearts. This would make them careful of obedience, and careful also to refrain from unnecessary cruelty to the Body of Jesus. They were acting under the watchful eyes of the Jewish religious fanaticism. To have shown favor toward the Body of Jesus while He was yet alive would have called down upon the soldiers the wrath of the maddened Jews, who would naturally have been more sensitive at this time because of the subconscious stirrings of their own evil consciences in view of what had happened during the day.

Thus urged by military, and religious, and personal fear, these soldiers dared not to fail in their appointed duty. They would not have deviated from their orders, except on the certainty that Jesus was dead already. Three of them at least were sufficiently convinced to take their lives in their own hands. They were willing, as it were, to wager life itself against the certainty that Christ was dead. The fourth confirmed his assurance by a spear-thrust that would have been fatal to any ordinary human life. Such was the strength of this official report of the soldiers on the death of Jesus.

The last witness to the Death of Christ was the Apostle John. He saw the things that happened, and knew whereof he spoke and wrote concerning this event. In his Gospel, John has testified

Again, following the lines of least resistance, they found it easier to reach the robbers, who were crucified on the ordinary low Roman crosses, while Christ's Cross, as is supposed, was much higher. The providential purpose of this procedure was to strengthen the testimony of these official witnesses.

³¹Much has been said and written about the "blood and water" that issued from the pierced side of Jesus. Those who are interested will find elaborate discussions of that subject in other books. It will only be observed here, that this result fully satisfied the soldiers that Jesus was dead; and that it argues also that Jesus probably died with (not of) a broken heart.

both to the fact of Christ's death, and to the fact of the conclusive testimony which was worked out by the Roman soldiers, as already described. He has affirmed, in substance, that he was present; that he saw what happened; that he understood what he saw; that he had faithfully reported the facts as they occurred; and that his personal testimony should be believed for all time.

(2) Official
Testimony of John,
As An Eye-Witness
John 19:35-37

John saw also into the deeper providential purposes of those doings of the soldiers on that occasion. He saw that they, both in what they had done, and in what they refrained from doing, had unconsciously fulfilled a definite word of divine prophecy. Exactly as God had said in ancient times, the soldiers had not broken a bone of Jesus, but they had "looked on Him Whom they pierced."³² This final testimony of John has the full force of a personal affidavit to the integrity of these events.

Through the thought of the law incidentally observed,³³ John has identified Jesus, in this hour of His death, with the Paschal Lamb of God. As such a "Lamb of God," John the Baptist had at first introduced Jesus to his own responsive disciples, one of whom was this John the Apostle. Thus the great personal Witness to these events brought his thought of this sacrificial death of Jesus back full circle to his own first introduction to the Son of God.

With this important fact, that Christ died on the Cross, according to the Scriptures, and that His Death was and is fully attested, the present chapter comes to its natural conclusion. In the next chapter the Burial of Christ will be set forth in a series of facts as carefully attested as was the great central Fact of His Death on the Cross.

³²*Psalms* 34:20; 22:16-17; *Zechariah* 12:10; *Revelation* 1:7.

³³Laws of the Passover—*Exodus* 12:43-49; *Numbers* 9:12; *1. Corinthians* 5:7. See also *John* 1:29.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE BURIAL OF CHRIST

"Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and He was buried, . . . according to the Scriptures." *I. Corinthians 15:3-4.*
cf. Psalm 16:10.

"And when they had fulfilled all that was written of Him, they took Him down from the tree, and laid Him in a sepulchre." *Acts 13:29.*

"The last enemy that shall be destroyed is Death." *I. Corinthians 15:26.*

"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." *Revelation 5:12.*

Christ died on Friday of the Passion Week, at three o'clock in the afternoon. The present chapter covers the events of the fifth and last stage of that eventful Crucifixion Day. The duration of this last stage of the day was from the Death of Christ, at three o'clock, until sunset, or about six o'clock, which was the beginning of the new Jewish day. This period from three o'clock until six was commonly called "the evening." During this period there were two important events, as suggested in the following continuation of the general outline of the Crucifixion Day:

V. The Fifth Stage: The Burial of Christ's Body and the Guard Set to Watch His Tomb

The reader will be aware at once of a marked difference in the narrative at this point. The supernatural events of the day had all past; and the Spirit of Jesus had returned to His Father. At once the happenings of this Fifth Stage of the day are felt to move on the lower level of the purely human, where the love and the hatred of men prompt and promote the things that are done. The things that are done are all related to the two central events which are to be considered in this chapter.

And yet the hand of God was evident in these last events. The Burial of Jesus, and the Setting of the Watch at His Tomb, were both done as the outworking of human feelings; but there was in these events the fulfillment of ancient Prophecy, and the providential accomplishment of God's purposes, through the love of men, and even through their malice.

1. The Body of Jesus Buried by His Friends. The Body of Jesus was buried by two of His notable friends, who had been

"With the Rich
in His Death"
Matthew 27:57-61
Mark 15:42-47
Luke 23:50-56
John 19:38-42

secret disciples of the Lord for a long time, as certain suggestions in the Gospels seem to indicate. The brief record of this Burial, an account of which was given by all of the Gospel Writers, moves simply, rapidly, and convincingly through four central topics of narrative interest. These four topics are, the

responsive friends who buried the Lord, the permission which they secured from Pilate, the interment of the sacred Body of Jesus, and the witnesses to this burial.

The two friends of Jesus who performed this last sacred rite of love and devotion to their crucified Lord and Master were men of high social and official standing in

1. Joseph and
Nicodemus, Who
Buried Jesus
Matthew 27:57
Mark 15:42-43
Luke 23:50-51
John 19:38-39

their day. They were both members of the High Court of the Sanhedrin, and were therefore well known in the City of Jerusalem, where they were doubtless highly respected. One of them was Joseph of Arimathea.¹ The other was Nicodemus,² whom the Lord Jesus once addressed as "a

master of Israel." They were both disciples of Jesus; but, for

¹Joseph of Arimathea, as he was commonly called, had come from a small town in Mount Ephraim, once noted, under the name of Ramathaim-Zophim (the lofty place), as the birth place of Samuel (*1 Samuel* 1:1). Matthew has affirmed that Joseph was rich, a point on which the ex-Tax-Gatherer would speak with authority. Mark, who wrote from Rome and for Roman readers, commended Joseph to them by exalting his official standing, designating him as "a councillor of honourable estate," and by magnifying his courage, asserting that he went boldly to Pilate about the matter of this Burial. Luke, who wrote for the Greek mind, universal in that day, exalted in Joseph the Greek ideals of an excellent character, describing him as "a councillor, good . . . and righteous." Matthew recorded that Joseph was a disciple of Jesus; and John has added that this discipleship was secret "for fear of the Jews." Probably this fear was a matter of expediency on the part of Joseph; for Mark and Luke have both affirmed that Joseph "was looking for the Kingdom of God." The meaning of this expectation was suggested by Luke when he explained that Joseph consented neither to the "counsel" nor to the "deed" of his fellow Sanhedrists in their dealings with Christ. This shows that Joseph disagreed with their thought about Christ (which thought, in its most vicious form, as will be remembered, was directed against Christ's newly organized Kingdom), and that Joseph also disapproved of the judgment and the maltreatment accorded to Jesus during His Trials and Crucifixion.

Joseph probably had a definite knowledge of Jesus. Doubtless he had witnessed the entire Trials and Crucifixion of the Lord. It is certain that all the things analyzed thus far in this study, and probably many more unrecorded, would have taken fast hold upon the mind and heart of this magnanimous Leader of Israel. Henceforth the secret discipleship of Joseph became one of open boldness. His faith, and that of Nicodemus, as manifested in their open devotion in this act of burying the Body of Jesus, is really remarkable.

The authentic history of Joseph is little known. Tradition affirms that he went to England, about the year 63 A.D., and that he built a little chapel in Glastonbury, the first Christian church in England. The staff which he stuck in the ground there on a hill-top is reported to have grown into the noted "thorn of Glastonbury," which budded and bloomed every Christmas Day. In literary legend Joseph is connected also with the Holy Grail.

Joseph was a rich man. In Jerusalem, he had followed a custom current among rich Jews since long before his own day, and had hewn for himself a tomb in one

fear of the Jews, they had kept their discipleship a secret up to the time of the Crucifixion. However, a radical change had come over their minds during that day of impressive events. Despite the fact that Jesus was certainly dead, these once secret disciples, in this courageous office of their friendship, boldly and publicly cast their lot with the Lord Jesus. The faith which they manifested was, under the circumstances, indeed remarkable.³

These two secret disciples were fellow-Sanhedrists. Probably they had known of each other's secret faith for many months. It

Their Probable Planning of This Burial

is almost inconceivable that they had not come to a mutual understanding of their common confidence in Christ. Probably they had often discussed together the question of faith and service. It is quite possible that they had stood together before the Cross during this great Day of the Crucifixion, and, as a result of this great experience, had agreed to make their faith known to the world. It is almost certain that they had planned together the Burial of Jesus, having arranged between themselves that, because of the shortness of the time, Nicodemus should go for the liberal supply of myrrh and aloes which he brought (about a hundred

of the solid rocks in a garden just outside of the city wall, as it then stood. Possibly this tomb, since it was new, and unused, and without a door, was just being completed at the time of Christ's Death. If such was the case, the tomb was just ready, in its perfect purity, to be dedicated, by the emboldened faith of this once secret disciple, as a resting place for the sacred Body of his Lord and Savior.

²The Bible sources of information concerning Nicodemus are limited to three passages in *John's Gospel* (3:1-21, if that was all spoken to Nicodemus; 7:50; and 19:38-42). From all of these passages it may be learned, that Nicodemus was a wealthy Pharisee, and a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin; that he was a reasonable and open-minded seeker after the truth; that he was possibly timid, and certainly cautious, and therefore secret in his approaches to Christ, and remained a secret disciple until the Crucifixion; that he was a student of the Law, being careful and conscientious, perhaps even courageous at times, as to its just application; that he had an open-hearted sensitiveness to spiritual truth, but, like many other sincere Pharisees, had been ill-instructed in the deeper workings of the Holy Spirit, and little experienced in the spiritual interpretation of God's Word; that he had probably come to an early quiet conviction and acceptance of Christ; that he was probably present throughout the Trials and Crucifixion of Jesus; and that he had been so deeply convinced by his experiences of Christ on that great Day that his own secret faith, like that of his fellow secret disciple Joseph, had become at once courageous and publicly active.

In speaking of Nicodemus, John always referred to that first nightly conference between Nicodemus and Jesus (*John* 3:1-21), as if that experience were the beginning of this disciple's spiritual awakening and faith in Christ. Probably that was the actual fact. That conference was early in the public ministry of Jesus. In Chapter IV above, it was shown in detail how the Divine Savior used the matter of that conference as the medium through which He gave to the waiting world His great analysis of the Way of Life on its receiving side. One likes to think of that great message as bearing immediate fruit in the faith, even though it was secret faith, of this "teacher of Israel."

It would have been strange had not such fruitage resulted from such a conference. Beginning with the mystery of spiritual regeneration as a condition of entering the spiritual Kingdom of God, Christ gave to Nicodemus an outline of the whole plan of salvation, with great encouragement to an open outright confession of faith in Christ, and to a fearless stand for the truth. The thought of verses 10 and 11 is especially significant as probably having an immediate tangible application to this seeker after truth. Nicodemus had witnessed Christ during those early days of His ministry, when His Divine Nature was being established, as seen in Chapter III above, and had concluded definitely that Jesus must be a Teacher Who com-

pounds),⁴ while Joseph should go to Pilate for the permission to remove the Body of Jesus from the Cross.

Joseph of Arimathea, being a wealthy man and widely known as a member of the Sanhedrin, probably had no difficulty in securing an audience with Pilate on this occasion. Possibly the Governor had qualms of conscience, resulting from the events of that day, which would render him more open to friendly approach at that time. He may have welcomed this opportunity of allaying his feelings by some act of kindness or generosity. Certainly his personal attitude toward the Jewish leaders in general would tend to produce a kindly feeling for the friends of Jesus.

But even Pilate had to exercise a certain judicial care in this matter: for the Body of Jesus as it hung on the Cross was woven about by a net-work of laws and customs, Jewish and Roman, which Pilate had to respect. The Roman custom was to leave the bodies of those crucified on the cross for days, until they were devoured by the birds and wild animals. The Jewish law required that such bodies be removed and disposed of on the day of the execution.⁵ Jewish regulations also required that the bodies on this occasion be disposed of before the great festal Sabbath which began at

manded divine resources, a Rabbi God-sent. Possibly there was, at first, a general feeling to this effect among the Jewish leaders, but with this difference. Nicodemus sought more truth, and was open-minded to things spiritual; while the others began early to define their attitude of opposition to the Son of God. Therefore, speaking in these verses to one who would hear the truth, Jesus pointed out thus early the exact trouble with the rulers of Israel; they did not, would not, and cared not to, understand things spiritual. Then to Nicodemus Jesus gave a personal assurance of His Own absolute authority, which was based upon divine experience in things spiritual. This was just what the leaders of Israel were rejecting and would continue to reject. In verses 15-17, Jesus expounded to Nicodemus the truth of salvation through the sacrifice of God's Son; and in verses 18:21, Jesus insisted upon the necessity of faith, and the importance of courage, in the Christian life.

Probably from the time of that memorable conference Nicodemus was a believer in Christ. Tradition affirms that, having accepted Christ, Nicodemus was baptized by Peter and John; and that he was supported, after being deposed from the Sanhedrin, by his great kinsman Gamaliel.

³This action of the two secret disciples, if it were known, would mean a break between them and the Sanhedrin. Moreover, their deed here could not have been done in secret. The place was public, and the soldiers were on guard. The Jews also, in their anxiety to remove the bodies from the crosses before sunset, would probably have been present when Joseph came for the Body of Jesus. Furthermore, the touching of a dead body would cause ceremonial defilement for seven full days; and the absence, on this account, of Joseph and Nicodemus from participation in the Passover Feast would at once bring them and their deed into public discussion. Their action in thus burying the Body of Jesus must have been a deliberate and definite public committing of themselves to the faith of Christ now crucified.

⁴The rich gifts made to Jesus are notable. Compare *Psalms* 45:8; 72:10-11; *Isaiah* 60:6; *Matthew* 2:11; 26:7; *Mark* 14:3; *John* 19:39, and other similar passages.

⁵*Deuteronomy* 21:22-23.

sunset after the Crucifixion. Both of these Jewish laws Pilate had already recognized when he sent the soldiers to hasten the death of those who had been crucified. Custom allowed the removal of such bodies for burial by the friends of those thus executed, but not without legal warrant from the Roman Governor. The Roman law further forbade the Governor to grant permission for any such removal until he was fully assured that the death of the person crucified was certain.

Joseph was therefore clearly within his legal rights in making this request, and Pilate was personally ready to grant it. But

**(2) Pilate's Care
in Granting the
Permission**

officially he had to safeguard himself by ascertaining for a certainty that Jesus was dead. Doubting the fact, and wondering at the report that Jesus had died so soon, Pilate sent

for the Centurion in order to have an official report upon which to base his own legal action. Having fully satisfied himself under this point of the law, Pilate at once issued an order that the Body of Jesus be given to Joseph for burial. The rulers of the Jews may have already been making plans for removing the three bodies from the crosses, and may have disposed of the bodies of the two robbers. But this warrant from Pilate gave Joseph full authority over the Body of Jesus, even against any Jewish objection that may have arisen; for the Body of Jesus was legally a charge of the Roman Government.

The Word of God, as a rule, makes small account of funerals and burial rites. "So David slept with his fathers, and was

**3. Interment of the
Body of Jesus
Matthew 27:59-60
Mark 15:46
Luke 23:53-54
John 19:38-41**

buried in the City of David," is a typical entry, even of the greatest of the kings.⁶ The Burial of Jesus was the most important burial in human history; yet the four Gospel Writers, in their combined records, devote less than nine full verses to this event. Three points of narration tell the story in its un-

adorned simplicity.

⁶See *1. Kings* 2:10. Compare the following biblical accounts of deaths and burials: Sarah, *Genesis* 23:1-20; Abraham, *Genesis* 25:7-10; Isaac, *Genesis* 35:29; Joseph, *Genesis* 50:26; Joshua 24:32; Moses, *Deuteronomy* 34:5-6; Solomon, *1. Kings* 11:43; *2. Chronicles* 9:31; John the Baptist, *Matthew* 14:12; Widow's Son at Nain, *Luke* 7:11-17; Dives, *Luke* 16:22; Lazarus, *John* 11:17-40; Stephen, *Acts* 8:2. There were many illustrious saints, like James of Jerusalem (*Acts* 12:2), whose burials are not even mentioned. This silence and suppression of details of this kind in the Scriptures is in striking contrast with the almost universal customs of the ancient world, with its professional mourners, funeral processions, tombs, sepulchres, pyramids, and other expressions of that emphasis which the orientals have always placed upon the importance of elaborate funerals. It is possible that Joseph and Nicodemus, as suggested by their gifts, made the Burial of Jesus as elaborate as the circumstances would allow; but the record of that event is very brief and simple.

Joseph, possibly aided by the Centurion and the soldiers, took the Body of Jesus from the Cross, perhaps after they had taken the Cross itself down and laid it on the ground. The tomb was in a garden near the place of the Crucifixion. Joseph had therefore brought the Body of Jesus to the place of burial by the time Nicodemus had reached the place for his part in the sacred rites. After the ablution of the Body, if they followed the custom of that day, they wrapped it ready for the burial.

(1) Wrapping the Body for Burial

This wrapping was closely related to the temporary embalming of the Lord's Body. The total process, "as was the custom of the Jews to bury,"⁷ was as follows: The head was covered with a napkin, the *soudarion*, as it was called, which the Lord, after His Resurrection, had carefully laid aside before leaving the tomb.⁸ The body was next wrapped in the clean white linen cloth, the limbs being bound separately by bands of this fine linen. Between the folds and layers of this cloth were placed the embalming mixture of *myrrh*, a strong-smelling gum, and *aloes*, a fragrant wood, which Nicodemus had brought in great abundance for that purpose.

(2) Temporary Embalming of the Body of Jesus

Having thus carefully prepared the Body of Jesus for burial, Joseph and Nicodemus "laid it in a sepulcher that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid."⁹ This new tomb was the property of Joseph, who had offered it for this sacred purpose.

(3) Laying the Body in the New Tomb

The newness of the tomb, a fact heavily emphasized in the records, prevented any possible contamination of the Lord's sacred Body, any possible confusion as to the resurrection, and any possible subordinate miracle at that time, such as had once happened at the grave of Elisha.⁹ All of these safeguarding points, as well as the fact that the tomb was hewn in solid stone, had a providential reference to the integrity of Christ's resurrection from the grave. After they had reverently laid the sacred Body in the grave, the two friends "rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb, and departed."¹⁰

⁷John desired to emphasize that the Body of Jesus was thus embalmed according to the Jewish process. Three methods of disposing of the dead were practiced in ancient times. The Jewish method was to bury the dead, after embalming, as was done here with the Body of Jesus. The Roman method was to cremate the body. The Egyptian method was to remove from the body all the viscera, and then, by long baking and other treatment, to render the remaining part of the body incorruptible, and, after that, to place it in a vault, usually well sealed.

⁸See *John* 20:7 below.

⁹2. *Kings* 13:21.

¹⁰This honorable burial was far from the degrading disposition which the malicious Jews had doubtless intended to make of Christ's Body, as suggested later in this chapter.

By this time it was near sunset, "and the Sabbath drew on," or "began to dawn," as the Jews expressed this sunset turning of the old day into the new. Yet there lingered at the Tomb of Jesus two witnesses of the burial of their Lord. These were Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses. Luke has suggested that they had come with the Body as it was brought from the Cross. Matthew observed that they sat "over against the sepulcher" while the Body was being buried. Mark recorded that they made a final survey of the Tomb before leaving it to "prepare spices and ointments" for the complete embalming of the Body as soon as the Sabbath had past. Thus the Life that began with two women in joyous anticipation closed with two other women in deepest devotion. These faithful women were destined to become two of the most faithful witnesses of the Risen Lord.

2. *The Grave of Jesus Guarded by His Enemies.* But other interests than those of devoted love were immediately centered upon that sacred Tomb. The malicious rulers of the Jews had a fear that something might happen there which would work to their own greater confusion. They therefore sought, and obtained Roman power and authority to make secure the grave wherein the Body of Jesus was buried.

These Jews were deeply concerned to guard the Tomb of Jesus until after "the third day," and probably most concerned to guard it on that third day,—the three days being Friday, the day of the Crucifixion, which ended with sunset; Saturday, *their* Sabbath, from sunset to sunset; and the Christian Sabbath, the Resurrection Day, which, however, as technically counted then, began at sunset on the previous day. Careful study points to the conclusion that the chief priests and Pharisees sought, secured, and set this Roman Guard at the Lord's Tomb on *their* Sabbath Day. In this fact two points of suggestive interest appear.

1. *Time of Setting This Guard* The first point is suggestive of the heart of those Jewish rulers. There is almost a wonder that even they should have thus desecrated their Holy Day so soon after the terrifying experiences that accompanied the Crucifixion. But there was an explanation. Their re-actions on this occasion showed how hopelessly incapable they were, with love shut out of their hearts as it was, to learn anything spiritual. There was here a full confirmation of many a charge which Jesus Himself had made against them.

4. *Lingering Witnesses of the Burial*
Matthew 27:61
Mark 15:47
Luke 23:55-56

Sepulchre Sealed and Guarded
Matthew 27:62-66

The other point is that this particular Sabbath of theirs, which they had thus violated, was doubly sacred. It was the Sabbath, and it was the high day of the Passover Feast. Both of these aspects of the day were being carefully observed by the followers of Jesus. This Sabbath was the last Sabbath of the Old Dispensation. It was also the last Passover Day. With it the Old Order came to an end. To-morrow's sun (or Son) should arise on a new Christian Sabbath, and into a New Dispensation of the World.

But this last Jewish Sabbath, their last Passover Day, properly speaking, was desecrated by the Jewish leaders. But that was not the worst. This violation was of such a nature as obviously to subordinate the divine sacredness of both the Sabbath and the Passover to their own selfish concerns. Such a violation of their last Sabbath was like a final convincing stroke of tragic irony providentially forced into their actions. It showed how utterly their hearts were void of love, which sympathetically seeks after God; and how completely their hearts were filled with malicious hatred, which is ever studious of self-justification.

Evil is naturally aggressive. Malice is often keener-eyed than love. The Jews had very definite reasons for desiring a guard for the Tomb of Jesus. They said to Pilate:

2. Reasons for

Wanting This Guard

"Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, 'After three days I rise again.' Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest haply his disciples come and steal him away, and say unto the people, 'He is risen from the dead'; and the last error will be worse than the first." Between these lines the reader may see two distinct motives which led to this request.

In the very wording of their request the Jewish leaders revealed a definite purpose further to defame Jesus. They showed

(1) Purpose to Defame Jesus, and to Flout Pilate

with equal clearness their intention to flout Pilate for permitting Joseph and Nicodemus to bury the Body of Jesus honorably, as they had done. This permission of Pilate had almost certainly defeated the purpose of the Jews to cast the Body of Jesus, in final disgrace, into the common dumping ground in the Valley of Hinnom. Therefore, when the chief priests and Pharisees came to Pilate, they expressed in language what they had failed to attain in deed, by using the worst name that they dared to use as a designation of Jesus. They said, as their words literally mean, "Sir, we remember that *that vagabond* (in modern terms, *that scallawag!*) yonder said . . ." In this one maliciously

chosen word, the Jews combined their scorn for Jesus and their contempt for Pilate.¹¹

But the Jews had another reason for desiring the Guard. Of far more importance to them than their ends of malice, was their deep haunting fear that the Resurrection of Jesus might actually take place. Their purpose was to prevent it, if possible; or to be prepared to explain it away, if it should actually occur. They knew that Jesus was dead, and had admitted the fact in their request to Pilate. They feared, nay, they almost believed, that He would rise again from the dead. They were determined to know the fact of His Resurrection, if it did occur. They were equally determined to be able, if possible, to cope with the situation, if the Lord should actually rise from the grave. Hence, under the pretext of fearing that the Body of Jesus would be stolen by His friends, the Jews solicited the power and authority of the Roman Government to assist them in controlling the situation respecting quite a different result,—a result toward which their haunting fears amounted practically to an expectation;¹² a result which would, as they well knew, mean the triumph of Christ's Kingdom in the world and their own ultimate undoing.

In a word, the chief priests and Pharisees sought Roman power with which to thwart the purposes of God. Pilate gave them the power which they asked. With imperial brevity, with lordly imperatives throughout, and with haughty scorn in his condescension, Pilate commanded that it be done, even as they requested. "Take a guard," he said; "go your way. Make it as sure (secure it for yourselves) as ye can (as ye know how)." Thus he placed power and authority unlimited at the command of Fanaticism, to do its best, to exhaust its malicious ingenuity, to take every neces-

¹¹Pilate and the rulers of the Jews engaged in a series of mutual retaliations throughout the Trials of Jesus and the Crucifixion scenes. When one can divorce his thoughts of the facts from their sacred significance, this combat of wits and malice becomes very entertaining.

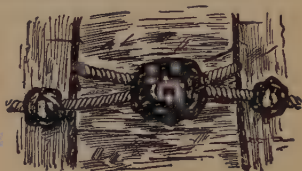
¹²The chief priests and Pharisees quoted Christ as having said, "after three days I rise again." Whence had they that quotation? They said that they remembered His saying those words. When did they hear them? It is true that Christ had announced this fact in private to His Disciples (Apostles), when speaking to them of His death. But the most probable supposition in this connection is this: that the enemies of Jesus took this quotation which they delivered to Pilate from the correct meaning of Christ's saying about the destruction and raising up again of the Temple, meaning His own Body. This His enemies had heard, perhaps several times, and probably had often heard it explained. If this was the true source of their quotation to Pilate, then the Lord's enemies, in this final scene, were compelled by circumstances to give the lie to their own hearts respecting one of the charges, involving malicious misrepresentation, for which they had persecuted Christ unto death. It is a singular fact, that every charge made against the Lord Jesus was providentially contradicted before He had risen from the grave, and most of them before He was buried on the Day of His Crucifixion.

sary precaution, fully to satisfy itself, in the attainment of its own intentions, which were equivalent to thwarting the high purposes of God Himself. Even the angels must have smiled as they watched the scene that was immediately enacted by these leaders of the Jews.

"So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch." They, in their keen-eyed malice, saw exactly what were the effective things to be

4. Fanaticism Using Power to Forestall Truth

done. They sealed the stone, and set the guard. In this, they were probably prompted by the precautions taken by the ancient king to keep Daniel in the Lions' Den.¹³ The common method of sealing a sepulchre in those days was this. A strong cord was passed around the stone in the door of the tomb, and the two ends were drawn out to the sides of the door, thus. Then the wax or clay seal was placed on the cord where it crossed itself in front of the stone-door, and where it touched the two sides of the tomb. This arrangement attached the cord to the stone-door, and to the two sides of the door, so that the stone could not be moved without breaking the seals. When the Jews, probably in this way, had sealed the sepulchre, using the official Seal of the Roman Government, they set an official Roman Guard to see that the Roman Seal was not broken. Thus they made the Lord's Tomb doubly secure, as they thought.



That, as it would seem to them, was all that was necessary. To tamper with that Seal meant death. To allow it to be tampered with meant death to the remiss Roman Guard, who knew that they were in the hands of unsparing religious fanatics, bent upon one purpose at any price. But the chief priests and Pharisees were satisfied, having done their best. They had set both the Authority and the Power of the Roman Government to safeguard the Lord's Tomb until the third day, and that was the Authority and the Power of the World at that time. They had made that Tomb absolutely secure against all possible forces—from *without*. But their Seal and their Watch were alike powerless against a possible *Power within*, which they had good reasons still to fear.

¹³See *Daniel* 6:16-17.

PART VII

THE EXALTATION AND SOVEREIGNTY
OF CHRIST

PROVISIONS FOR CHRISTIAN SERVICE

CHRIST AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD

"There is no God else beside Me; a just God and Savior; there is none beside Me. Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by Myself, the word is gone out of My mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. 'Surely,' shall one say, 'in the Lord have I righteousness and strength: even to Him shall all men come; and all that are incensed against Him shall be ashamed.' In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory." *Isaiah 45:21-25.*

"God . . . hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, Whom He hath appointed Heir of all things, by Whom also He made the worlds; Who being the brightness of His Glory, and the express Image of His Person, and upholding all things by the word of His Power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on High." *Hebrews 1:1-3.*

MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Ephesians 1:7-23.

Colossians 1:10-23.

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God: praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." *Ephesians 6:10-18.*

CHAPTER XXVII

THE RISEN LORD

"I am He That liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen." *Revelation 1:18.*

"This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses." *Acts 2:32.*

"Him God raised up the third day, and showed Him openly; . . . unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead." *Acts 10:40-41.*

"I am the Resurrection, and the Life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." *John 11:25.*

"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." *Romans 10:9.*

"And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept." *1. Corinthians 15:17-20.*

The Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ was a *fact*. It was an event, a thing that happened. It was so regarded by the Writers of the Sacred Scriptures. It was so regarded by others in that day who saw the evidence. It was so regarded by those who knew the circumstances under which this event was advertised before the world.

Like all the original facts of history, and science, and philosophy, this Fact is supported by the integrity of eye-witnesses who were in position to know whereof they spoke and wrote. Their testimony, resulting from multiplied observations and experiences, is much the same in *kind*, and is fully as trustworthy in quality, as the announcements that are heralded from learned laboratories, where men are engaged, with test-tubes and microscopes, in modern scientific observation and investigation.

Three things should be kept well before the mind as one thinks of this great Event. First, learning was never a condition of telling the truth. Second, except for the limited few who actually observe what happens, either in history or in the test-tube, all history and all science must, in the last analysis, rest upon the testimony of others. Third, one single fact, one actual event, is superior to all the theories in the world. In view of these three principles, the Fact of the Resurrection is well supported; and this Fact, like all other facts, is vastly superior to the conclusions that men arrive at who argue from theoretical hypotheses, and

who follow certain types of *a priori* reasoning. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ was a Fact.

Some preliminary Observations on the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Resurrection, as a Fact, is a thing to be reckoned

1. Nature of the Resurrection

with, a thing to be taken into account. It is not a thing to be denied, or to be explained away, as some have vainly tried to do. No one will deny that this Fact lies on the border line of the Supernatural. But who can with reason deny that the Supernatural is also a Fact. The Resurrection does represent one of those many points where God has touched visibly the world in which men live.

But why should it be thought a thing incredible that God should thus touch the world. There is but a thin veil that separates the Seen from the Unseen. On one side of the almost invisible division line was God, who has, without question, power that is quite sufficient for such an achievement. Paul supposed that even an enlightened pagan would admit that truth.¹ On the other side, the visible human side of the boundary line, was the fact of the Resurrection. This Fact is quite clearly within the ken of history, and science, and philosophy. The results of it are seen everywhere. The Resurrection, through its power and influence, has established its own integrity imperishably upon the Mind of the thinking World.

Naturally, the study of such an event as the Resurrection presents some difficulties. Even the recorded testimony of the eye-witnesses offers some problems at first. In approaching the study of this Fact, therefore, a few things should be kept in mind. There are difficulties, but none of them are beyond possible solution. Most of them are on the surface. Beneath them all, and above them all, there is also the evident control of a Divine Hand, seen both in the Fact and in the records of the Fact, that gives an abiding confidence.

Some find a difficulty in this situation. The friends of Jesus were amazed at His Resurrection. They were slow to believe the testimony of others, and some even to believe the witness of the concrete Fact. His enemies, however, felt otherwise. It seems that they would have been greatly surprised if He had not risen from the dead. They remembered His statement to that effect, and feared its truth. They took every possible precaution to prevent this Fact. But the Event happened, in spite of opposition.

¹"King Agrippa," said Paul, "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" Acts 26:7-8.

Finally, the unbelieving friends were completely convinced. In these circumstances the Higher Hand of God was only preparing for a support of double strength to the Fact of the Resurrection.

Again, there are difficulties in harmonizing the records of certain appearances of the Risen Lord. The problems that arise are doubtless due in every case to the want of a knowledge of all the facts as they actually happened. The Risen Lord appeared at intervals during the forty days between His Resurrection and His Ascension. Eleven appearances in all during this period, some of them a week apart, have been recorded. Probably there were other appearances, possibly many more of them. Possibly, as some have supposed, the Risen Lord, in many ascensions, went to and from the Earth to His Throne in Heaven. Certainly many things happened during those forty days which are not recorded in the Scriptures. In the absence of all the facts, the relation between certain of the recorded appearances approaches clearness only after very careful analysis of the parallel records.

Since all the facts are not given in the Scriptures, there was evidently some principle of historical selection on which these

3. Divine Purpose in the Selective Records of the Resurrection

records were made. Probably each of the Gospel Writers, and also the Apostle Paul, had a conscious and individual purpose in the making of his own particular record of the Resurrection Period. Doubtless each of them desired to present some special phase of the Risen Lord and of His meaning to the world. Such a supposition would help to solve some of the problems of these manifold records.

But these are not separate and unrelated records. The Spirit of Inspiration has built them together into the unity of a deeper Divine purpose than is evident in any one of the separate Writers. That fact strongly supports the inspiration of these records, and therefore supports the great central Fact of the Resurrection therein recorded.² These Writers did not record that Christ

²The several records of the post-Resurrection appearances of the Lord Jesus were written far apart in time and place, as will appear in the following tabulation:

Record	Writer	Year A.D.	Place of Writing
<i>1. Corinthians</i>	Paul	57	Ephesus
<i>Matthew</i>	Matthew	58	Jerusalem
<i>Luke</i>	Luke	60	Caesarea or Rome
<i>Acts</i>	Luke	63	Rome (?)
<i>Mark</i>	Mark	68	Rome
<i>John</i>	John	90	Ephesus

Each of these writers, in each of these records, was moved, no doubt, immediately by his own independent purpose. Yet the whole record is one record. In it there is an obvious constructive unity. The several contributions blend into an underlying logic and progress of thought. Evidently the Spirit of God was here speaking, in the deeper sense, His one message to the world. The unity of thought, and the progressive purpose here revealed, plainly require the fact of Inspiration.

appeared here, there, and yonder, merely to prove that He rose from the dead. Beneath the surface of these records there is the total unity of a Divine purpose clearly reflected, an evident principle of selection, which greatly helps to harmonize the details of the several records.

During these forty days Christ did not merely appear. He was busy all the time in each appearance, as the following outlines will show. The several appearances have their distinctive purposes. But they are all built together into one greater central purpose. They unite in recording one of the most active and constructive periods of all Christ's life-work. The present chapter deals mainly with the Fact and the Necessity of the Resurrection. But during most of this period, as will appear in the next chapter, the Lord Jesus was profoundly concerned with the work and the problems of His Kingdom in this present World.

I. The Fact of the Resurrection

The first part of this composite, cumulative, and unified exhibition of the inner purpose and message of the Risen Lord has to do directly with the Fact of the Resurrection. This Fact was brought before His Apostles, who were the subsequent witnesses to all the world, in two distinct ways. First, it was revealed to them through the discovery of the empty Tomb. Second, it was confirmed to them by the appearances of the Lord Himself, as seen by the women, and reported to the Apostles. It will be observed later that the Apostles, at first, accepted the Fact on evidence seen and heard, and believed in the Resurrection before the Risen Lord had appeared to any of them.

1. *The Lord's Empty Tomb.* The enemies of Jesus had securely sealed His Tomb, and set their Watch. The curtain of night had fallen upon the world. Then a new day dawned. It was the First Easter Morning, the new "First Day of the Week," the blessed Christian Sabbath. The inevitable Event, the much feared Event, the little expected Event had happened. At an early hour on that morning an Angel of the Lord had descended from Heaven. There was an earthquake; and this Angel rolled away the stone from the door of the Tomb, frightening the soldiers on guard until they were as dead men.³ The

First Easter
Morning
Matthew 28:1-8
Mark 16:1-8
Luke 24:1-12
John 20:1-10

³The effects of this Angel were three in number. By his terrible presence he frightened the soldiers on guard, who may have been the same that crucified the Lord Jesus, and were so deeply affected by His death. He rolled the large stone,

Tomb, thus opened, was found to be in order. But the Lord Jesus was not there. He had risen already, His Resurrection Body not being subject to the ordinary laws of physical objects. He had risen *from within*, being "raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father." Death was swallowed up in victory.

This empty Tomb of the Risen Lord was discovered first by the devoted women who had lingered with Him during His Crucifixion. Some of them had been the last to leave the Tomb before the Sabbath, when the Body of Jesus was buried by Joseph and Nicodemus. These women who first found the empty Tomb had come early in the morning for the purpose of completing, or of helping to complete, the embalming of the Lord's Body, which had been temporarily embalmed at the time of His Burial. They seem to have known nothing of the Roman Guard at the Tomb; and they were certainly not looking for the Resurrection.

From the records it would seem that these women came to the Tomb in groups.⁴ Mary Magdalene, according to John's statement, must have come first, since she came "while it was yet dark." When she arrived, she saw that the stone was rolled away from the door of the Tomb, and went at once and told Peter and John.⁵ Her only thought was that the grave had been pillaged. Probably her fear and terror was lest the Lord's enemies had carried His

probably six by three feet in size, away from the door of the Tomb, out of which the Lord Jesus had already gone forth. He showed the empty Tomb to the women, when they appeared there in the early morning for their ministry of love to the Body of Jesus.

For other instances of angels associated with the important events in the life of Christ, see the Announcements (*Luke* 1:11; 1:26; *Matthew* 1:20); His Birth (*Luke* 2:8-14; *Matthew* 2:13, 19); His Temptations (*Matthew* 4:11); His Agony in the Garden (*Luke* 22:43); His consciousness of them at the time of His Arrest (*Matthew* 26:53); and this scene at His Tomb. The generally accepted view is that the angels, as His ministering spirits (see *Hebrews* 1:6-7, and the half-truth quoted by Satan in *Matthew* 4:6), were always present with the Lord, sometimes in great numbers, and with power to make themselves visible on occasion, as one and another of them did in their several appearances to the women at the Lord's empty Tomb.

⁴A comparison of *Mark* 15:47 and 16:1 with *Luke* 23:55-56 and 24:1 suggests that the women may have separated into groups when they left the Tomb at the time of the Burial. It is possible that one group went at once to prepare spices and ointment; and the other group, who lingered longer at the Tomb, waited until after the Sabbath was past (that is, until after sunset twenty-four hours later) to buy their supplies for the embalming. This last group, the Mary Magdalene group, came first to the Tomb early on the following morning.

⁵Another possibility is that Mary Magdalene had come to the Tomb with the other women of her group; but that she, seeing the stone rolled away (*Mark* 16:4, and *John* 20:2), had left the group at once, and gone to inform Peter and John; and that, for this reason, she was not with her own group when they conversed with the Angels. If that was true, John is supposed to have told her story separately because of her message about the empty Tomb, and what followed from that first report.

sacred Body away, and possibly thrown it into the common dump in the Valley of Hinnom. With great excitement, therefore, she hurried away to report the empty Tomb to Peter and John. Yet she spoke of her fear with a delicate reserve: "They have taken away the Lord out of the Tomb, and we know not where they have laid Him." From this report it is evident that Mary had seen no Angel, and that she knew nothing then of the Resurrection.⁶

But the empty Tomb was explained almost immediately by the Angels, who told the Fact of the Resurrection to the women who were associated with Mary Magdalene in her plans of devotion to Jesus. These women came to the Tomb in two groups, one a little later than the other. The two groups, therefore, received different words of comfort, re-assurance, explanation, and instruction as to the report they should make to the Apostles concerning what they had seen and heard.

The explanation of the empty Tomb was first made to that group of women of which Mary Magdalene was a member. In that group were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome, and possibly others. With Mary Magdalene, or probably a little later than she, as previously suggested, these women had come to the Tomb very early in the morning, apparently about sunrise. Their purpose was to help complete the embalming of the Lord's Body.

⁶The probable order of events on the first Easter Day (the first Christian Sabbath) has been stated as follows, by Professor Westcott, in his widely known "provisional arrangement" of these events, giving the approximate time of each of the events:

Very early on Sunday—The Resurrection, followed by the earthquake, the descent of the angel, the opening of the tomb (*Mt.* 28:2-4).

5 a. m.—Mary Magdalene, Mary, the (mother) of James, and Salome, probably with others, start for the sepulchre in the twilight. Mary Magdalene goes before the others, and returns at once to Peter and John (*Jn.* 20:1).

5:30 a. m.—Her companions reach the sepulchre when the sun had risen (*Mk.* 16:2). A vision of an angel. Message to the disciples (*Mt.* 28:5, etc.; *Mk.* 16:5, etc.).

6 a. m.—Another party, among whom is Joanna, come a little later, but still in the early morning (*Lk.* 24:1, 10; *Mk.* 16:1). A vision of "two young men." Words of comfort and instruction (*Lk.* 24:4, etc.).

6:30 a. m.—The visit of Peter and John (*Jn.* 20:3-10). A vision of two angels to Mary Magdalene (*Jn.* 20:11-13. About the same time the company of women carry their tidings to the Apostles (*Lk.* 24:10, etc.).

7 a. m.—The Lord reveals Himself to Mary Magdalene (*Jn.* 20:14-18; *Mk.* 16:9). Not long after He reveals Himself, as it appears, to the company of women who are returning to the sepulchre. Charge to the brethren to go to Galilee. (*Mt.* 28:9, etc.).

4-6 p. m.—The appearance to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus (*Lk.* 24:13, etc.; *Mk.* 16:12).

After 4 p. m.—An appearance to St. Peter (*Lk.* 24:34; Cf. *1. Cor.* 15:5).

8 p. m.—The appearance to the eleven and others (*Lk.* 24:36, etc.; *Mk.* 16:14; *Jn.* 20:19).

Upon approaching the Tomb, while yet some distance away, they had bethought of a fact which gave them great trouble. They remembered the great stone which they had seen Joseph and Nicodemus, after the Burial, roll to the door of the Lord's Tomb; and they were perplexed to know how they should roll away this great stone. Evidently they, too, knew nothing of the Roman Guard that was placed at the Tomb; for the Lord's friends had carefully observed the Sabbath Day. But their problem, as they soon discovered, had already been solved. The stone had been rolled away by the Angel, who was then sitting on the stone near the door awaiting the arrival of these women.

**a. Women's Problem
of the Grave-Door
Already Solved**

Naturally the women were greatly frightened at the sight of this Angel. His appearance was as lightning. His raiment white as snow. His imposing presence had terrified, with benumbing fear, the Roman soldiers then on guard at the Tomb. But the Angel, immediately upon seeing the women, spoke kindly to them. "Fear not ye," he said: "for I know that ye

**b. First Angel's
Message to the
Women**

In the above table one point must be specially noticed: *two companies* or separate groups of women are mentioned as going to the sepulchre with the same pious object of assisting in the final embalming of the sacred body.

If this be assumed to be the fact, there will be nothing improbable in the supposition that both of these groups of women, all doubtless intimate friends belonging to the little company of the Master, but living probably some distance apart in Jerusalem, came together some time on the Sabbath Day, and then arranged to meet early on the first day at the sepulchre. Probably the spices purchased in some haste just before the Sabbath commenced were judged inadequate.

(1) For in *Luke 23:56*, we read of a company of women, most probably including all i. e. both groups, of holy women, who, after beholding the sepulchre, "returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the Sabbath Day." (But contrast Note 4 above).

(2) In *Mark 16:1*, we read, "When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene,

and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought (not had bought) sweet spices, that they might come and anoint Him." This company (alluded to in *Mark 16:1*) arrives the first at the sepulchre, and sees the vision of one angel (*Mk. 16:5*). The other company (alluded to in *Luke 24:1*) arrives not long after at the sepulchre, and sees the vision of two angels (*Lk. 24:4*).

In considering the accounts of the Resurrection, the following memoranda will be found suggestive:

(1) *The holy women* are the principal actors in all the four accounts of the circumstances connected with the Tomb. But their assertions were not believed by (all) the disciples until their statements were fully confirmed by other evidence.

(2) When St. Paul (*1. Cor. 15:8*) sums up the great appearances of our Lord, the basis of our faith he makes no reference to His appearance to Mary Magdalene (*Jn. 20:14*, etc.; *Mk. 16:9*) or to the women (two Maries, *Mt. 28:9*, 10).

(3) No evangelist describes the Resurrection—no earthly being having been present. St. Matthew is the evangelist who, in his narrative, goes furthest back. He mentions the shock of the earthquake,

the awful presence of the angel, the benumbing terror which seized the guards who were watching. Most probably these signs accompanied the Resurrection.

(4) The Risen Lord appeared only to His own (cf. Chap. XXVIII, note 24).

(5) That no future doubt should be thrown on the reality of the appearances of the Risen (Lord), He showed Himself not only to solitary individuals, but to companies, i. e. to two, to the eleven (repeatedly), and to above five hundred brethren at once. And these manifestations took place (a) at different hours of the day; (b) in different localities—in Judea, in Galilee, in rooms of houses, in the open air.

seek Jesus, which hath been crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, even as He said. Come see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell His Disciples, 'He is risen from the dead; and lo, He goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see Him': lo, I have told you." That was the message of the First Angel, who sat at the door of the Tomb.

The first care of the women was to view the empty Tomb. In response therefore to the Angel's invitation, they entered into the door of the Tomb. There they saw, with great amazement, within the Tomb, "a young man sitting on the right side, arrayed in a white robe." This Second Angel, seeing their state of mind, also spoke words of comfort to the women. "Be not amazed," he said: "ye seek Jesus, the Nazarene, which hath been crucified: He is risen; He is not here: behold the place where they laid Him! But go, tell His Disciples and Peter, 'He goeth before you into Galilee:' there shall ye see Him, as He said unto you.'" That was the message of the Second Angel, who sat within the empty Tomb. The women hurried away from the Tomb.

The immediate and hurried re-action of the women arose from the double motive of fear and joy. They were deeply disturbed by what they had seen and heard, and hurried in their obedience to the heavenly vision. But deeper than their fear, was the joy they had from the message sent by them to the Apostles. The women therefore "departed quickly from the Tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His Disciples word." Mark stated that they "fled from the Tomb; for trembling and astonishment had come upon them." He also added that "they said nothing to any one" on the way: "for they were afraid," evidently of the Jews.

The first group of women had probably just gone from the Tomb, in their haste, when the second group arrived. To them also the empty Tomb was explained. In this group were Joanna, and the other women who had come from Galilee, ministering to the Lord in His work. They knew nothing of the Roman Guard at the Tomb, and nothing of the Resurrection. They probably had planned to meet

**c. Second Angel's
Message to the
Women**

**d. Women's Hurried
Departure from the
Empty Tomb
Matthew 28:8
Mark 16:8**

**(2) Explanation to
the Second Group
of the Women**

Luke 24:1-9

⁷The Angel here quoted the words of Jesus as given in *Mark 14:28*. The verb used here means to *go before as a shepherd*, and is strongly suggestive of Christ's gathering again the sheep which were scattered when their Shepherd was smitten. Cf. *Zechariah 13:7*, and *Matthew 26:31*.

their friends at the Tomb, and had reached the place just after sunrise. They also "found the stone rolled away from the Tomb."

Everything was quiet at this time. The women had courage to enter the open Tomb. Not finding the Lord's body, they were greatly perplexed. Probably they sat down for a moment in meditative wonder, not knowing what had happened, and what they should do. Then suddenly "two men stood by them in dazzling apparel: and . . . they were affrighted, and bowed down their faces to the earth."

Seeing the fears of the women, the "two men," who were two Angels, spoke, with reason and re-assurance, in the following words: "Why seek ye the Living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how He spake unto you when He was yet in Galilee, saying that the Son of Man must be delivered up into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again."⁸

These comforting words seem to have allayed the fears of the women in this second group; for there is an evidence of calm self-possession in the record of immediate events. It is said that "they remembered" the prophetic words of Jesus to which the Angels had alluded, but with what gleams of new understanding the records do not

**c. Calm Response
of the Women to
the Two Angels**
Luke 24:8-9

state. "And (they) returned from the Tomb, and told all these things to the Eleven, and to all the rest." It is plain that this second group had additional suggestions beyond those in the message delivered to the first group, and that these women went away to deliver their message in a very different state of mind from that in which the first group had left the empty Tomb.

By this time Mary Magdalene had already brought to the Apostles her distressing report of the empty Tomb. Doubtless they knew that the Roman Guard had been placed to guard the Tomb, and therefore found great difficulty in imagining who could have dared to molest the Lord's grave. While they were thus perplexed at Mary's report, the other two groups of the women came, with their cumulative explanations of what had taken place at the Tomb. Which of these groups first found

**3. Empty Tomb,
with Explanations,
Reported to the
Apostles**
Luke 24:10-11
Cf. John 20:2

⁸For the predictions of Christ concerning His own Resurrection, see *Matthew* 12:40; 16:21; 17:23; 20:19, and the parallel passages.

the Apostles is not known; for the records state only the general fact, that they all came, and "told these things unto the Apostles." But the Apostles did not believe these reports. On the contrary, their general attitude was one of contradiction: for "these words appeared in their sight as idle talk; and they disbelieved them."⁹

But simultaneously the thought touched the hearts of Peter and John that these strange reports, these unbelievable reports, might yet be worth investigating. Luke stated the matter in a general way, recording only a part of the part that was played by Peter in this investigation. But John has stated, in circumstantial detail, first what happened in the part played by Peter, and then the profound inrush of the truth upon his own mind and heart.

4. Empty Tomb Investigated by Peter and John
Luke 24:12
John 20:3-10

In order to make their investigation, Peter and John set out in haste, running together, to the Tomb of Jesus. John, being the younger, reached the place first. He stopped at the door of the Tomb, possibly for ceremonial reasons,¹⁰ but by stooping down he surveyed the interior of the Tomb, and saw the orderly manner in which the Risen Lord had left His grave clothes. Then came Peter, who, with characteristic impulsive enthusiasm, entered at once into the Tomb.

Peter, with great care, and with a deepening sense of awe, surveyed the entire situation within the empty Tomb. He saw "the linen cloths lying, and the napkin that was upon His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but rolled up in a place by itself." Then, as Luke has said, Peter "departed to his home, wondering with himself at that which was come to pass." Probably he could not doubt; yet he certainly did not fully comprehend what had taken place at the empty Tomb. Possibly, also, it was just this lingering uncertainty in Peter's mind that caused the Risen Lord to appear to Peter first among all the Apostles.¹¹

⁹They did not believe then. Yet the memorable words of Renan are now true: "La grande affirmation de femme, 'Il est ressuscité!' a été la base de la foi de l'humanité." But at the first the Apostles insisted upon concrete personal experience. They wanted to see the empty Tomb. Some of them even demanded to see the Risen Lord. "Seeing is believing," was their attitude; and this gave a final strength to their convincing testimony. Cf. *John* 1:14, and *1. John* 1:1-3.

¹⁰It is interesting to note again the suggestion of care on the part of the Disciples of Jesus to observe the Jewish ceremonial law (Cf. *Luke* 23:56). It may have been the dawning of the new truth, as stated below, that led John to enter the Tomb, after he had first halted for fear of ceremonial uncleanness during the great feast, if he should thus touch a grave.

¹¹See pages 667-669.

But the result was different with John when he entered the empty Tomb. He saw the facts, and grasped their true significance. All doubt in his heart was swept

(2) Basis of New
Enlightened Faith
on the part of John
John 20:8-10
away at once. A new enlightened faith took hold upon his very soul. With one great inrush into his spirit, the truth came in its simple fullness. Having entered into the

Tomb, he "*saw and believed*. For as yet they knew not the Scripture, that He *must rise again* from the dead."

"*He must rise again from the dead.*" Being Divine, the Son of God, Jesus *must* rise again! Like a flash of light from Heaven, the whole truth came to John at that moment.

a. Truth As
John Saw It
Suddenly the promises and the prophecies of the Lord Jesus took on a new character and

assurance to John: for Jesus must rise again from the dead. Suddenly the once dark sayings of the Lord were made luminous and clear: for He must rise again. He had in fact already risen. A new sense of Christ's Kingdom, and of His glorious destiny dawned then upon the Apostle of Love. A new meaning of Christ's character and sovereignty was then revealed to one who was capable of understanding the Truth as it is. John had seen the Truth aright: and with him there was no more doubt or question.

Christ must rise again from the dead. John saw the inner necessity for that truth. He had stood near the Cross, and there had seen Jesus, with sovereign majesty, lay down His life, *submitting Himself* to death on the Cross, for a great purpose. At last John had come to understand the truth clearly. The Sovereign Son of God could not possibly be holden of death. It was necessary for Christ as Savior to suffer and die. But it inhered in His very Divine Nature that He should rise again from the dead, and so pass into His eternal glory with the Father. The inner necessity of the Resurrection, this truth which the Risen Savior taught others later, with divine patience,¹² came all at once to the mind of John, as he stood there in the empty Tomb. Henceforth he was prepared to accept the Fact of the Resurrection: for he had seen why *it must be so*.

b. Probable Report
of John to Mary
There is a profound touch of human interest at this point in the sacred narrative. In the simplest way possible, John recorded the fact that he went away to his own home, after this experience in the empty Tomb. In a general way, to avoid being

¹²See Section II below in this chapter

too personal, John made the statement, as if it applied also to Peter: but John was clearly speaking more directly of Himself.¹³ He had a very special reason for going to his own home at this time.

John had left the Mother of Jesus at his own home, doubtless perplexed and lonely in her sorrow.¹⁴ She had a first right to share in the truth which had come with such fullness to John. The thought of John's heart, sensitive as it was with love and sympathy, turned at once to Mary. What comfort this Truth would bring to her sorrowing heart! What new wonders she would have to ponder in her deepest heart, when John brought to her his message from the empty Tomb! These things are suggested in the sacred records; but the Spirit of Love, with divine delicacy, has drawn the curtain of silence over the concrete expressions of her sorrow and her joy at this time.

There is also a logical and moral significance in this exalted faith of John. His faith was a typical faith. Jesus had not yet appeared to any one, when John came to this positive conviction of the truth. Neither did the Lord appear at all until at least one mind and one heart were ready to receive Him. Again, this first firm faith in the Risen Lord *was based upon evidence*. It did not result directly from an immediate personal experience with the Lord Himself as One Risen from the dead.¹⁵ Furthermore, this faith of John resulted also from a recognition of God's Word, and the compelling consistency of that Divine Truth as wrought into concrete physical consequences. Finally, this faith of John was an effective contradiction, in advance, of the falsehood, the exact opposite to this truth, which the enemies of Christ were even then preparing to propagate in their fruitless attempt to explain away the Fact of a Necessary Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

¹³From the statement in *Luke* (24:12), it seems very clear that Peter had already gone from the Tomb to *his own home* when John entered the Tomb. Peter went to his own home, which was doubtless the place where the Disciples were assembled, or were expected to assemble. But John evidently, as he has said, went to his own home, and did not return at once to the other Apostles. There is beautiful significance in the thought that John first carried his new vision of the Truth to the sorrowing Mother of the Risen Lord.

¹⁴See Chapter XXIV, pages 605-607. It will be observed that Joseph, the husband of Mary, is never mentioned in the later chapters of the Gospel narrative.

¹⁵Compare *Luke* 16:30-31. See also *1. Peter* 1:8, and *1. John* 4:12, 20. John's faith arising from the compelling consistency of truth, and its harmony with external facts, was like the faith of all men since that day. John believed in the Risen Lord *before* he had *seen* the Risen Lord. Through the testimony of truth and fact, John saw and knew that Jesus had risen; because he saw that *the Lord* had to rise from the dead. There is no definite evidence in the Scriptures that John, after this experience at the empty Tomb, ever doubted the Resurrection of Christ, unless John is to be included in the notes of general hesitation on the part of the Apostles. This is not likely. On the contrary, the fact of debate among the Apostles argues the presence among them of some strong exponent of the truth.

The Father of Lies had much to lose in the general acceptance of this Resurrection truth, which was so clearly understood by John. Satan saw his ultimate defeat in the Resurrection of the Son of God. Seeing this truth, and its inevitable consequences of disaster to himself, the Imperial Deceiver of Men bestirred his followers to organize a campaign of error and falsehood, and to enter upon a propaganda of deception, to offset the faith of men in the Risen Lord of

**5. Empty Tomb
Denied by the Chief
Priests and the
Pharisees**
Matthew 28:11-15
Cf. Matt. 27:63-66
Matt. 28:4

Truth and Life. This counter-movement of falsehood the King of Darkness set in motion through the chief priests and Pharisees, who were allied with him in opposition to Christ, and to His Kingdom in the world.¹⁶

This conflict between Truth and Error was already well under way. While the Spirit of Truth had been preparing the way, as already seen, for an open and positive reception of the Risen Lord, the soldiers, previously set to guard the now empty Tomb, had hastened into the City, after they had recovered from their terror (*Matthew 28:4*), to report what had happened, as far at least as they knew the facts.

This report could not be complete in itself as respects the facts. However, enough facts could be given to bring deep concern to those to whom it was made. The soldiers had forsaken their post of duty, and fled terrified, after their first paralyzing fear. They had hastened into the City, with an apologetic explanation: for they were in great danger because of their unsoldierly action. They went at once to the rulers of the Jews, knowing that to them, first of all, this stationed Guard was responsible. These fear-stricken pagan soldiers were unbiased in their report; since they had nothing to gain one way or the other so far as the Resurrection Fact was concerned. As a matter of duty, they

**a. Incompleteness
of the Report**

¹⁶Compare *John 8:44*. Never were these fearful words of Christ more forcibly true than they were in this clash between Truth and Falsehood respecting the Lord's Resurrection. But this falsehood was, in itself, only the next logical step in that deep and sinister deception, carried on from the beginning, by Satan and his followers concerning Christ and His Kingdom. There was the early attempt to overthrow the integrity of Christ in the Temptations; then the effective personal rejection of Him; later, the opposition to His Kingdom in the hearts of others; next the attempt to destroy Jesus by crucifixion; here, the effort to discredit His Resurrection; soon after this, the hampering efforts to Judaize the entire Early Church. It was all one prolonged opposition, with many and varied aspects and stages. During the Lord's life-work, and since, Satan has made use of every possible power against Christ, and against His Kingdom, from the jealousy of King Herod to the Jewish and Roman persecutions, and all manner of subtle temptations to error and apostasy.

had come at once to their first masters to make an official report, as far as they knew the facts, of what had happened at the empty Tomb of Jesus.

The soldiers had a story to tell. They had experienced the earthquake. They had seen the Angel who had come with his terrifying majesty. They may have seen the Angel roll away the stone from the door of the Tomb. They could have reported that the Tomb, when opened, was already empty. They knew that the Body of Jesus had not been taken away by human agency. They knew that some Supernatural Power had visited the Tomb. They knew the effect of terror which they themselves had experienced. These strange things, and possibly others unrecorded, they had come to report to the rulers of the Jews.

As guards of the Tomb, they had failed, because they had come face to face with a Power from above, and a Power within the Tomb, with Which they could not cope. They came, therefore, to the Jews with a straightforward story. They told their story, in all sincerity, as an explanation of their own conduct. They explained the facts, as they were, in justification of their own failure. They frankly admitted both the facts and the failure, notwithstanding the natural tendency of this admission to increase their own new danger to court-martial, to which they were now liable under the persecution of a disappointed and enraged religious fanaticism.

But these soldiers needed not to fear the chief priests and the Pharisees at this time. They had on hand another matter which completely engrossed their attention. They understood the meaning of the facts to which they had listened, and knew that they must at once cope with a new situation. To these things, therefore, the leaders of Israel gave at once a double response of truth and falsehood.

Among themselves they admitted the truth of the Resurrection. Their whole action proceeded upon such an admission. They called one of those hasty councils which they and the elders, in their organized opposition to Christ, seemed ever ready to assemble at a moment's notice. Having come together, their first action was tacitly to admit the truth of the Resurrection: for they knew that such a truth lay back of the soldiers'

b. Contents of the Report

c. Sincerity of the Report

(2) Re-Actions of Truth and Falsehood on the Part of the Jews
Matthew 28: 12b-15

a. Admission of Truth among Themselves

report. The Jews knew well that it was only by the reality of such a Fact that their sealing of the Tomb, and their Guard of Roman soldiers could come to nought. The rulers of Israel felt the irony of fate which held them fast.¹⁷ They therefore took action, in their council assembled, upon the great Fact of the Risen Lord, and set themselves to cope with that important Fact as best they could.

That best was poor enough. They saw at once that a false report was their only resort. The Fact they could neither doubt nor deny. Their only hope was to buy off the truth. They therefore offered the soldiers large money as a bribe. They made up an ill-starred, self-contradicting circumstantial lie for the soldiers to propagate before the world. The rulers of the Jews bribed the soldiers to say, "His disciples came by night, and stole Him away while we slept." But such sleeping while on duty carried the death penalty to a soldier. The Jews therefore further agreed that they would stand between the parrot-lying of the soldiers and their dangers from the Roman Governor. The soldiers were venal enough for the bribe, and daring enough for the risk. They therefore accepted the bargain offered by the Jews; and the lame falsehood, thus originated, has hobbled down through the centuries since that day.¹⁸

2. *The Confirming Appearances of the Risen Lord to the Women.* But this paid-for falsehood of the Jewish leaders had little effect. The Fact of the Resurrection, first comprehended by John, took gradual hold upon the Apostles, and upon the entire Christian community. This rapidly growing faith was greatly accelerated, on the Resurrection Day, by the early confirming appearances of the Risen Lord to the women, who immediately reported the facts to the Apostles. There were two such appearances at an early hour on that first Easter Morning.

¹⁷That irony consisted in these facts. The rulers of the Jews had steadily refused to see and reckon with the spiritual; and by the Spiritual in Jesus they had lost. They had constantly denied the Divinity of Christ; and yet He, in His Divine Power, had gone from them. They had set a Guard to watch His Body in the grave; and yet that Guard had, by their experience with the facts, become a potential and courageous witness of His Resurrection. They had, despite all their care, found themselves ensnared in the meshes of the complex situation which they themselves had planned to keep events under their own control. Yet they believed not, and refused to believe, even though the Son of God had Himself come to them from the dead. Cf. *Luke* 16:31.

¹⁸The leaders of the Jews, as it appears, actively promoted this falsehood in that day. Justin Martyr (c. 100—165 A.D.) affirmed that the Jews sent messengers in all directions, proclaiming this falsehood. Matthew, guided by Inspiration, recorded

The First Appearance of the Risen Lord was that to Mary Magdalene. Mark has expressly stated that such was the case; "He appeared first to Mary Magdalene."

1. First Appearance: With this statement of Mark, John is in full agreement, in giving his fuller account of the circumstances under which the Lord Jesus appeared on this first occasion after

His Resurrection.

The circumstances were as follows. Mary Magdalene, and the other women had made their several reports to the unbelieving Apostles concerning the empty Tomb: and Peter and John had hastened to investigate the empty Tomb, with the results that have already been considered. Mary had left the other women, and had followed Peter and

(1) Circumstances of the First Appearance
John 20:11-13

John to the Tomb, arriving there, of course, later than they. Possibly they, having completed their separate investigations, as previously described, had gone away before her arrival. However that may have been, they did go away, and she was left at the Tomb alone, and in deep distress: for she thought only of the sacred Body that was gone, and she knew not where it was.¹⁹

John's record of the situation is as follows: "But Mary was standing without at the Tomb weeping: so, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the Tomb; and she beholdeth two angels in white sitting, one at the head, and one at the feet, where the Body of Jesus had lain. And they say unto her, 'Woman, why weepest thou?' She saith unto them, 'Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him.'

"When she had thus said, she turned herself back, and beholdeth Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, 'Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?' She, supposing Him to be the gardener, saith unto Him, 'Sir, if thou

the facts, as analyzed above, to explain the origin of that wide-spread lying rumor. Pilate, so far as is known, did not punish the soldiers for their failure to keep the guard at the Tomb, as they were appointed to do. Possibly the Roman Governor had an early report of the Resurrection, and believed in the Fact. There is evidence that Pilate did know, a little later, about the Resurrection. There is a report, made by Hegesippus and by Eusebius, and confirmed by Tertullian, that Pilate sent an account of the Resurrection to the Emperor Tiberius; and that this Emperor tried to have the Senate, by its decree, enroll the Name of Jesus among the Roman gods.

¹⁹Since Mary was not thinking of the Resurrection, it is possible that she had made her report of the empty Tomb to the Apostles, and then, in anxious haste, had left them, returning toward the Tomb, before the other women had arrived with their messages from the Angels respecting the Resurrection. In that case, Mary would know only of the Tomb as empty. Peter and John, having received the further report of the Resurrection, and running toward the Tomb, would easily pass Mary on the way; and events would then happen as described above.

hast borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away.' Jesus saith unto her, 'Mary!'"

That was the manner of the Lord's First Appearance. It is clear that Mary had no thought then of the Resurrection. Distracted with grief, she only sought the missing Body of Jesus. The sight of the gardener gave her hope. "Possibly he would know something," she thought to herself.²⁰

(2) Manner of the First Appearance
John 20:14-16

So, with a gesture toward the empty Tomb, she said, in words of deepest sorrow, "Sir, if thou hast borne Him hence, tell me . . . and I will take Him away!" Never, perhaps, was more human love put into a single sentence. Following her explanatory gesture toward the empty Tomb, she had fixed her sad eyes again upon the place where the Lord had lain.

When Jesus heard these words of love and devotion, spoken by Mary, He spoke an answering love in the one familiar word, "Mary!" He intended therein to make Himself known to her. The message went to her knowing heart. Quickly she turned from the empty Tomb, and looked upon her Lord. With deep affection she exclaimed, "Rabboni!

(3) Mary's Emotional Recognition of Jesus
John 20:16

Master!" Doubtless she fell at the Lord's feet in humble devotion; but the sacred historian has here left the details of the scene to the reader's imagination.

Here was an emotional recognition, come at by the heart, and not intellectual, like those later of the Apostles. The first thing noticeable, in the Lord's reply to Mary, is the number of terms of affection used by Him. His first purpose was fully to comfort her sorrowing heart. He desired, at the same time, kindly to correct her mistaken

(4) Christ's Corrective Message to Mary
John 20:17

²⁰Mary possibly supposed this gardener to be Joseph, the owner of the garden, or some representative of his, who could speak from definite knowledge. The friends of Jesus frequently did not recognize Him immediately, as will be seen in the following study of His appearances. Why was it so? Possibly this fact was due to some permanent change in the appearance of the Lord Himself, arising from His intense suffering on the Cross, or from the glorified state of His Resurrection Body. "His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men." Perhaps these words applied to His Resurrection Body. Again, this failure to recognize Him at once may have arisen from a power within Himself, whereby He could change His physical likeness at His own will (Cf. *Mark* 16:12); for His Body, in its Resurrection state was not subject to the ordinary laws that govern physical conditions. Furthermore, this failure of immediate recognition may have been due to some temporary limitation imposed by the Lord Himself, for various reasons, upon the cognitive powers of those to whom He appeared. Dr. Westcott has wisely said, "It is vain to give any simple natural explanation of the failure of the disciples to recognize Christ. After the Resurrection He was known as He pleased, and not necessarily at once . . . Till they who gazed on Him were placed in something of spiritual harmony with the Lord, they could not recognize Him." The natural impression upon the reader is that Jesus, by His own power, determined this matter of recognitions.

idea of an ultimate joy at this moment. Probably she fell at His feet, after the manner of her former devotion in Galilee. Probably she showed definite evidence of thinking that the Lord returned to His physical presence on earth was the last highest occasion of joy. But that was not the highest occasion for joy. It was more a beginning than an end.

Hence the Lord's corrective explanation at this time. The Resurrection was but the beginning of His glorification. Jesus therefore expressly emphasized the contrast between His Resurrection and His Ascension. His thought carried the suggestion that she should reserve her greatest joy for the final triumph of His glory, when He should be re-enthroned with His Father in Heaven. Hence, in corrective restraint, He said to her, "Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended unto the Father: but go unto My brethren."²¹

Christ here made a definite contrast between inactive devotion and active duty. Mary's part then was duty: He had something definite for her to do. He saw, no doubt, that it would greatly clarify her own thought as to the New Order now beginning, if He should send her to the Apostles with the following important message. Hence He commanded her in these words: "But go unto My brethren; and say to them, 'I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.'" That was the first message directly from Jesus to His Apostles after His Resurrection from the dead.

That message was the profoundest of all assurances. It meant that the glorification, for which Christ had so earnestly prayed, in the completion of His work as Savior,²² was now in its last stage of fulfillment. The humiliation, the obedience, the suffering, the death, and even the resurrection, were all past and perfected. It only remained for Him to return to His Father, and the Father also of those whom He had bought unto Himself with His own Blood, and made to be His brethren in the family of the redeemed. Mary understood this message, possibly having received fuller explanations of it than the records have preserved.

²¹"My brethren,"—a new name for His followers. Gradually this exalted designation had been evolved—*slaves, servants, disciples, ministers, apostles, friends*, and finally *brethren*. Christ recognized them now as His brethren. But He recognized, with careful discrimination, that there was a difference between Himself and them. This difference He marked in these words, "My Father and your Father, and My God and your God." In the case of Jesus Christ, the Fatherhood of God was one of Divine Nature. In the case of the Apostles, as here used, it was the result of divine and saving grace. Cf. *John* 1:12; and *Hebrews* 2:11.

²²See *John* 17:1, 5.

She went, therefore, at once to the Apostles, and testified to them of Christ's appearance to her, and delivered to them His affectionate message.²³

Through this message by Mary the Lord Jesus made to the Apostles His official announcement that He had risen from the

2. Second Appearance: to the Other Women

Matthew 28:9-10

dead. Naturally enough it will appear, when rightly considered, that the Lord Jesus regarded that one announcement as sufficient.

It was the statement of a fact, which He did not repeat, after having announced it once

through the Angels and once through human testimony. In His next message to the Apostles, Jesus instructed them as to what they should do, in view of the fact that He had risen from the dead. This had already been suggested by the Angels at the empty Tomb; but this also Christ repeated by direct message from Himself to the Apostles.

This Second Appearance of the Risen Lord was that to the other group of women, the Joanna group. This group had already

(1) Circumstances of the Second Appearance

seen the empty Tomb, and reported it to the Apostles, as previously described. Certainly such a report must be read into Matthew's record, between verses 8 and 9 of his Twenty-

Eighth Chapter. The Logic of the entire situation argues that these women had already reported to the Apostles, and left them, when this Second Appearance took place. It is probable that the women had turned again toward the empty Tomb. Possibly they had intended to follow Mary Magdalene, in her visit to the Tomb, where she held converse with Jesus in His First Appearance, as stated above; but, because of some indirection possibly in her course or in theirs, they had failed to meet Mary in the way.

It was while the women were thus in the way, that "Jesus met them, saying, "All hail!" (or, more literally translated 'Rejoice ye!'). "And they came and took hold of His feet, and worshipped Him." Then, as if He found a special joy in the new name He had given to the Apostles, Jesus said to the women, "Fear not: go tell My brethren

²³Mark has added this statement concerning the reception of Mary's message by the Apostles: "And they, when they heard that He was alive, and had been seen of her, disbelieved." This was spoken of the group as a whole. It should be remembered, however, that John, who had previously comprehended the necessity of the Resurrection Fact, very likely was not with the other Apostles at that time. They were probably at the home of Peter. But John, who had gone to his own home to report his new conception of the truth to the Lord's Mother, probably could not have rejoined the group of the Apostles before Mary Magdalene had made her report.

that they depart into Galilee, and there they shall see Me." That was the pre-arranged meeting place, after the Resurrection; and there, as He had said, the Apostles should soon go to meet with their Risen Lord.

But as yet none of the Apostles had seen Him. The Fact of the Resurrection was made known to them in two ways: by the evidence of the empty Tomb, reported by the women, and investigated by Peter and John; and by the testimony of the women concerning the First and Second Appearances of the Risen Lord. There was also given a suggestion as to what the Apostles should do in carrying out the previous plans for a meeting with them in Galilee.

II. The Necessity of the Resurrection

The Resurrection Period was forty days in length, those forty days between the Resurrection of Jesus and His Ascension. The records of this period began, as already seen, with the Fact of the Resurrection. This Fact was evidentially presented to the Apostles, as previously stated, before they had seen the Risen Lord. The record of events advanced, in this second part, from the Fact, to a consideration of the Necessity of the Resurrection.

"Not Possible That He Should Be Holden of (Death)"

1. Corinthians 15:4-5

Mark 16: 12-13

Luke 24: 13-35

Hitherto Christ had sent messages. In this period of new development Christ appeared twice, and dealt directly in person with those to whom He appeared. First, He appeared to Peter, probably about four o'clock in the afternoon of this first Easter Day. Near the same hour on that afternoon, He appeared to the Two Disciples on their way to Emmaus. During these appearances Jesus went beyond the mere Fact of the Resurrection. He imparted to His friends the truth, which had become so real to John on that morning while he stood within the empty Tomb, that there was a *necessity* that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and Savior of the World, should rise again from the dead. That was the truth to which the Lord Jesus now gave personal and authoritative emphasis.

1. *"Christ Died, . . . Was Buried, . . . and Rose again, According to the Scriptures."*²⁴ "Christ must needs have suffered, and

²⁴Compare the following Scriptures with one another: *Genesis* 3:15; 12:3; 18:18, and *Deuteronomy* 18:15, 18, with *John* 5:45-47, and *Acts* 26:22-23—*Psalms* 16:7-11, with *Acts* 2:31; 13:34.—*Psalms* 22:1-31, with *Mark* 15:34, etc.—*Isaiah* 28:14-18, with 1. *Peter* 2:4-8.—*Isaiah* 53:1-12, with *Acts* 8:30-38, and 1. *Peter* 2:24.—*Jonah* 1:17; 2:1-10, with *Matthew* 12:40; 16:3b-4. See also *Daniel* 9:26; *Hosea* 6:1-3; *Zechariah* 12:10; *John* 2:18-22; 20:8-9; *Luke* 24:25-26; 1. *Peter* 1:10-11, and many other similar Scriptures. See also the types and symbols of Christ, and of His death, and His Resurrection, in the Old Testament, which have their fulfillment in His life-work as recorded in the New Testament.

risen again from the dead." So said Paul, in his three Sabbath sermons in the City of Thessalonica.²⁵ So he wrote also, in the

**Third Appearance:
to Simon Peter**

1. Cor. 15:3-5

Luke 24:34

later remarkable testimony concerning the Resurrection which he put into his *First Letter to the Corinthians*. Introducing that testimony, Paul affirmed that the first article of his instruction, and of his preaching, was

this same truth: "That Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures: and that He was seen of Cephas."

Possibly Paul, in this statement, had in mind such Scriptures as those given in Note 24 above. It is more likely, however, that he was thinking more comprehensively of the whole plan of God to send His Son into the world as a Savior—a plan for the gradual unfolding of which, in one aspect or another, the entire Old Testament stands. In either case the truth is the same. Paul saw clearly that in the Divinity of Christ, as exhibited in the Scriptures, inhered the first conclusive argument for the Fact of the Resurrection: for Christ must rise from the dead. After this inner necessity, and second to it in evidential value, Paul cited the proof of Christ's Resurrection in the facts of His appearances. Among these, in Paul's notable list, since he did not mention the appearances to the women, that to Simon Peter comes first. This was really the Third Appearance of the Risen Lord.²⁶

Two points of special interest attach to this Third Appearance of the Lord Jesus. The first point is the fact that Christ appeared

**1. Reasons for
Christ's Appearing
First to Simon Peter**

first to Peter among the Apostles. Why was it so? Doubtless there were reasons for this fact, other reasons, indeed, than the fact of Peter's melancholy denial of the Lord at the time of His Trial. It is quite possible that that incident of the denial was not a reason at all for this first appearance to Peter, that matter having been, in all probability, settled by the forgiving grace of Christ already.²⁷ Why then did Christ appear first to Peter?

²⁵See *Acts* 17:2-4. It may be noted that there was a persuasive power in this truth of the Resurrection, as then presented by Paul, which took firm hold of the best people in Paul's audience on that occasion.

²⁶This Third Appearance is recognized, though not recorded, in the Gospel narrative. Luke (24:34) plainly pointed to this appearance when he said that the Apostles were discussing an appearance to Peter when the Two Disciples returned to Jerusalem, near the close of this first Easter Sabbath, to report their experiences with the Risen Lord on the way to Emmaus.

²⁷The effective look of Jesus, at the time of the Denial, probably contained a compassionate gesture intended to save Peter from the situation into which he had brought himself. The weakness of the Apostle had probably been forgiven. The

From all the facts, it seems that this special appearance to Peter at this time must have arisen from the imperfection of his understanding, and consequently of his faith, when he had left the empty Tomb in the early morning hour of this Resurrection Day. John had comprehended the truth; but Peter had not done so. There were many reasons for having these two leading Apostles, members of the Lord's Inner Circle, brought first into possession of the truth. But Peter did not yet enjoy that possession. All day long, from about 6.30 a. m. until about 4 p. m., Peter had been left to "wonder with himself" at the meaning of the things he had seen and heard.

The doubts and problems that passed through Peter's mind during those hours of wondering, his conclusions and resulting mental attitudes, are matters which no one now can know. But there must have yet remained some particular conditions of mind on his part which this personal contact with the Risen Lord alone could fully satisfy. Peter's convictions and faith, in the last analysis, rested more confidently upon the witness of external facts than upon the persuasive arguments of inherent necessities. Peter wanted to see the facts, and to hear from another right instructions in the truth. Therefore the Lord Jesus had appeared, as it seems, in this special instance to supply that support of truth which was yet lacking in the faith of Peter.

The other point of special interest in connection with this Third Appearance of the Risen Lord is the manner in which Paul has introduced his witnesses to the Resurrection of Jesus. Paul omitted the testimony of the women altogether. He went back, in his thought, to a point before the Lord had appeared to any one at all. He went back, in fact, to the incident of Peter and John in the empty Tomb, and followed, in his thought, the line of Christ's *direct dealings* with men. By following this line of thought, Paul side-stepped entirely the *indirect testimony* rendered by the women, which was to the Apostles and not to the world in general.

That is, the world's faith in a Risen Savior has two strong anchors. The one of these rests in the Divine Nature of the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ was Divine: and that fact settled the question of the Resurrection. Paul made his first appeal to this argument. He defined a Resurrection confidence that arose from

Angel at the empty Tomb had directed a special message to Peter about the appointed meeting in Galilee (*Mark* 16:7). Except for one other possible reference to the defection of Peter on that occasion, the Denial was never alluded to again by Christ. See page 690 below.

2. Reasons for Paul's Manner of Citing His Witnesses

a sense of the inner relations of God's eternal Truth concerning His Son sent to save the lost world. For this confidence Paul

**(1) John's Anchor
of Faith in the
Logical Necessities
of Truth**

found an ample basis in the exhibitions, *within the sacred Scriptures*, of a Divine Savior, and of His consequent schedule of Death, Burial, Resurrection, and Glorification. That was essentially the faith of John

in the empty Tomb, when he "saw and believed" the inner meaning of the Scripture. He understood that Christ, being of Divine Nature, must rise again from the dead.

The other anchor of the soul's faith in the Risen Lord rests securely in external testimony. It is made firm and strong by

**(2) Peter's Anchor
of Faith in Objec-
tive Facts and
Instruction**

the evidence that arises from tangible facts, and by the truth that is presented by authoritative instruction. This was what Peter had needed that morning when he left the Lord's empty Tomb. At that point of need,

Paul began his powerful citation of external witnesses. His obvious purpose was to show how capable was the Lord to provide for the wondering heart also an unshaken ground of complete confidence in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

2. *The Discourse of Jesus on the Necessity of His Death and Resurrection.* On the Resurrection Day, in the afternoon, the

**Fourth Appearance:
to Two Disciples
on the Way to
Emmaus**

Mark 16:12-13
Luke 24:13-35

Risen Lord appeared twice. These appearances were near the same hour of the day. The one was that to Peter, as already described. The other was that to the Two Disciples who were on the way to Emmaus, a village situated six and one-half miles southeast of Jerusalem. This appearance to

the Two Disciples on the way was the Fourth Appearance of the Risen Lord on that first Easter Day. The burden of His discourse at this time was the inherent necessity of His sufferings and of His glorification, in view of all that God had said of His Son in the sacred Scriptures.

The Two Disciples were on the road to Emmaus when the Lord appeared to them. One of them was Cleopas. The other, whose

**1. Circumstances of
the Fourth Appearance**

Mark 16:12
Luke 24:13-19a

name is not given, may have been Luke, who has fully recounted the incident. As they walked, they were sadly reviewing the recent happenings which had gathered about the Death and the reported empty Tomb of the

Lord Jesus. They were perplexed, and their hearts were sad.

As yet they knew not of the Lord's earlier appearances. Neither had they, as it seems, even heard the conclusions arrived at by

(1) Limited Knowledge of the Two Disciples

John that morning, when he surveyed the empty Tomb. If these things were true, then these Two Disciples had probably left the group of the Apostles soon after Peter had returned from the empty Tomb, with his marvelous report, and before John had rejoined the group, after his return from the empty Tomb by way of his own home. Apparently they knew nothing of all these things, except the report of the empty Tomb.

There were some advantages then in this limited knowledge on the part of these Two Disciples. It enabled Christ to make the exhibition of His Resurrection as necessary from the Truth of the Scriptures more effective. It also enabled Christ to assume for this discourse a setting, in the minds of these men, prior to all of His own personal appearances. It enabled Christ to teach these men, exclusively from the Scriptures, the exact truth that John had comprehended early that day in the empty Tomb. It enabled Christ also, a little later, to teach that truth to these Two Disciples in the same manner as that in which He had taught it to Peter, by a confirming personal revelation of Himself in this Fourth Appearance.²⁸

The manner of Christ's appearance was this. The minds of the Two Disciples were filled with those things with which Jerusalem was all astir when they had left the City.

(2) Manner of the Fourth Appearance

"And it came to pass, while they communed and questioned together, that Jesus Himself drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not know Him." They thought that He was only a stranger who had fallen in with them on the way.

But this unknown Sojourner at once showed a sympathetic personal interest in the sad reflections of the Two Disciples. He asked them, saying, "What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?"

When Jesus had asked this question, the Two Disciples paused in the way. This hesitation may have resulted from the manner of their journey, which gave wide margins for leisurely contemplation. In that case, they merely stopped to talk. The hesitation may have arisen, however, from some special attention value

²⁸In this connection, it is interesting to observe that both Luke and Paul, who were closely associated in their life work, and probably so in their writings, have omitted all references to the First and Second Appearances of the Risen Lord, when He appeared to the women. With both of these writers the touchstone of Resurrection faith was the effect of the varied experiences of Peter and John at the empty Tomb.

in the intonation of the Lord's interested question. It may have come from blank astonishment on the part of the Two Disciples. The pause then was an unconscious emphasis upon their wonder that even one stranger could have been in Jerusalem, and not have known the things that had recently happened in that City.

Whatever the cause, "they stood still, looking sad. And one of them, named Cleopas, answering, said unto Him, 'Dost thou alone sojourn in Jerusalem and not know the things which are come to pass there in these days?' And He said unto them, 'What things?'"

This last question was one of those teaching questions which the Master Teacher so often used with great effect. He had a great message to deliver to them at this time. He desired, therefore, to draw out their minds as a basis upon which to build the great lesson which He was about to give to them. The resulting response was what

He had expected.

The Two Disciples, in reply to the Lord's question, gave a clear and comprehensive report of what was in their minds touching the Christ. They gave His name and character:

(1) Report of the Two Disciples Touching the Christ
Luke 24:19b-24

"Jesus of Nazareth, . . . a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people." They recited the facts of His Trials and His Death: "how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him up to be condemned to death, and crucified Him." They expressed their own deep disappointment: "But we hoped that it was He which should redeem Israel." They doubtless recalled certain current sayings about a resurrection on the third day. They told in detail the amazing reports of the women concerning the empty Tomb, and the confirming investigation of the Apostles, who had verified the fact for themselves. And they closed their account of these events with the fact (so far as they knew), which was probably stated with a doubtful suggestion in their tone of voice, that the Lord *had not been seen*.

This suggestion of a doubt, and the mention of a past hope in Christ as the Redeemer of Israel, provided an exact teaching point for the Lord's reply. Christ, Who was still unknown to them, began His instruction with a stern reproof. "O foolish men,"

He said, "and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets

have spoken! Behooved it not *the Christ* to suffer these things, and to enter into His glory?"

Why the severity of this reproof? The reason is this. They knew not the truth, and the fault was plainly theirs. If they had only found the truth of a Divine Savior, the true Messiah, in the Old Testament, then there would have been no question about either the redemption of Israel, or the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Did not the ancient Scriptures present the Messiah as a Divine Person, the Jehovah of the Ancient Covenant, the Son of God! Did not the same Scriptures teach, in direct statement, and in a thousand types, symbols, and sacrifices, that this Divine Messiah, this Hope of Israel, should die for the sins of His people? And did not the very fact of His Divinity carry with it the necessity of His Resurrection from the dead, and His entering again into Glory with His Father? It could not be otherwise, if they had only understood the Scriptures.

But these truths they did not know. John had learned them. Paul has used them, later of course, but very effectively. But these Two Disciples did not know. For their want of understanding, Christ held them severely at fault. He even pronounced them *foolish and slow of heart to believe* in all that the prophets have spoken. Yet Christ was patient with these men. "Beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself."

This lesson of the Master Teacher is now lost. But the general tenor of His thought has been suggested. From many a sacred Scripture, He pointed out the essential truths of His Divine Nature, and the Plan of Redemption through His death and exaltation as Mediator at the right hand of God.²⁹ Christ's ap-

²⁹The Scriptures which the Lord is supposed to have especially had in mind at this time are the following, and probably many others:

Promise to Eve (*Gen* 3:15).
 Promise to Abraham (*Gen*, 22:18).
 Paschal Lamb (*Exod*. 12).
 Scapegoat (*Lev*. 16:7-10).
 Brazen Serpent (*Num*. 21:9).
 Greater Prophet (*Deut*. 18:15).
 Star and Sceptre (*Num*. 24:17).
 Smitten Rock (*Num*. 20:11).
 Redeemer (*Job* 19:25).
 Anointed One (*Ps*. 45:7).
 Immanuel (*Isa*. 7:14).
 Child Born (*Isa*. 9:6, 7).
 Good Shepherd (*Ps*. 23:1; *Isa*. 40:11).
 Corner Stone (*Isa*. 28:16).
 Holy One (*Isa*. 41:14).
 Light of Gentiles (*Isa*. 42:6).

Savior (*Isa*. 19:20; 60:16; *Jer*. 14:8).
 Rock of Offence (*Isa*. 8:14).
 Meek Sufferer (*Isa*. 50:6).
 Man of Sorrows (*Isa*. 53:3-5).
 Branch (*Jer*. 23:5; 33:14; *Zech*. 6:12).
 Lord our Righteousness (*Jer*. 23:6).
 Heir of David (*Ezek*. 34:23).
 Messiah the Prince (*Dan*. 9:25).
 Son of God (*Dan*. 3:25).
 Ruler from Bethlehem (*Micah* 5:2).
 Desire of all Nations (*Hag*. 2:7).
 Lowly King (*Zech*. 9:9).
 Pierced Victim (*Zech*. 12:10).
 Smitten Shepherd (*Zech*. 13:7).
 Messenger of Covenant (*Mal*. 3:1).
 Sun of Righteousness (*Mal*. 4:2).

parent purpose here was to establish three truths clearly in the minds of these two unsatisfied disciples.

First, Christ desired to instruct His hearers in the truth that the Christ (their Messiah), although He was the Son of God, must suffer even unto death, as Jesus had done. He further desired to show them that the Christ, since He was the Son of God, must of necessity rise again from the dead, and enter, through death, into His glory. He desired, still further, to impress them with the truth that their doubts were unnecessary, if they had only met their own full responsibility. If they had learned what their own Scriptures had taught concerning the nature and mission of the Christ, then they might have believed in the Resurrection as a thing of necessity. They might have believed this Fact, even before they had seen the Risen Lord. If they had only found a Divine Christ in their Old Testament, and then had rightly recognized the Divinity that was in Jesus of Nazareth, they would have known that Jesus Christ, Who was crucified, must rise again from the dead. That was the lesson, as regards both truth and responsibility, which Christ laid upon the hearts of His two hearers on the way to Emmaus.

While He was teaching Jesus was unknown to the Two Disciples. He presented to them the Resurrection as a necessity

3. Christ's Manner of Making Himself Known to the Two Disciples

Luke 24:28-31

inherent in the truth of Scripture. He then gave to His hearers a concrete proof of Himself as Risen from the grave. Thus He combined, in this total situation, the total experience of both John and Peter. After presenting the argument from truth, Christ

revealed Himself to the Two Disciples in the following manner.

"And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they were going: and He made as though He would go further. And they constrained Him, saying, 'Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is now far spent.' And He went in to abide with them. And it came to pass, when He had sat down with them to meat, He took the bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew Him; and He vanished out of their sight."

4. Results of This Fourth Appearance of Christ

Mark 16:13

Luke 24:32-35

The results of this Fourth Appearance of the Risen Lord were of two kinds: the immediate, and the more remote. The Two Disciples, immediately after the departure of Jesus, commented on the power and influence of His Personality and His message upon their own

spirits. Their very hearts had burned within them, while He, though still unknown to them, had opened to them the Scriptures. Having thus reflected upon the situation, "they rose up that very hour, and returned to Jerusalem," to make a report to the Apostles and other Christians within the City.

The Two Disciples, thus honored, hurried to the City. They found the Eleven Apostles, and others with them, gathered together, probably in the Upper Room.⁸⁰ The

**(1) Debate Among
the Apostles**

group was divided in thought at that time. They were engaged in vigorous discussion. There were two questions before the house. These involved exactly the two aspects of Resurrection Faith which had been effected separately in John and Peter. The one statement was, that "*The Lord (note the word) is risen indeed.*" The other was, that "*(He had) appeared to Simon.*" But it seems that these statements were under debate, because they were not being fully believed by all of those who were present.

This was the situation when the Two Disciples from Emmaus entered the assembly room. Naturally, they had an early opportunity to present their testimony. They made a full circumstantial report. "They rehearsed the things which had happened in the way, and how (the Risen Lord) was known to them in the breaking of the bread." There can be no doubt about the profound attention which the assembled hearers gave to the report of these remarkable events.

This concrete testimony, as it would seem, should have been completely conclusive. But it was not. Mark has added a note, saying "Neither believed they them." However, there was a more direct, and more convincing testimony presently to appear in the midst of those assembled witnesses.

⁸⁰Probably John was present at that time, for it was in the early evening. But the designation, "the Eleven," was an official term to denote the group of the Apostles, and it does not necessarily mean always that they were all present. Again, Mark does not necessarily mean that all who were present refused to believe. On the contrary, his statement seems to imply that they were already doubting Peter's report, which Luke mentioned as then under discussion. There was an evident difference of opinion, probably most of them arrayed against John and Peter.

CHAPTER XXVIII

"THE THINGS PERTAINING TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD"

"He will swallow up death in victory; . . . and it shall be said in that day, 'Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord; . . . we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.'" *Isaiah 25:8-9.*

"Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses of these things; and so also is the Holy Ghost." *Acts 5:31-32.*

"But we see Jesus, Who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man." *Hebrews 2:9.*

"Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, *Rejoice!*" *Philippians 4:4.*

Hitherto this survey of the Resurrection Period has been concerned with the Resurrection itself. Up to this time, the records have looked always backward upon the Event, first upon the Fact, and then upon the Necessity of the Resurrection, as a thing that had already happened. But there was a change in the direction of interest at this time. The appearances of Jesus after the first Easter Day continued to have great evidential value in support of the Fact of His Resurrection. But the main interest of His appearances, beginning with the Fifth Appearance, pointed more definitely toward the future. The Fact of the Resurrection had already been established. Therefore Christ dwelled, in the later appearances, upon the problems and duties which confronted His disciples in view of the Fact that He was risen from the dead.

The Risen Lord had another purpose, in addition to that of being seen, which He wished to accomplish during those forty days of the Post-Resurrection Period. That purpose, according to Luke's statement, was to give "commandments unto the Apostles whom He had chosen, . . . and (to speak to them) of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God."¹ This chapter, in which is continued the general outline of the Resurrection Period, will show the forward reference in the remaining appearances of the Risen Lord.

**Christ's Post-
Resurrection
Purpose**

¹See *Acts 1:1-3.*

III. The Responsibilities Consequent upon the Resurrection

This turning toward the future in Christ's thought was marked by a gradual transition of emphasis. In the Fifth and Sixth Appearances, which are now to be considered, the Lord did not wholly withhold His attention from the Fact and the Necessity of the Resurrection. He did, however, during those appearances, throw a well-defined emphasis upon the responsibilities to which the Apostles, and others, should give serious concern because their Lord had risen again from the dead.

1. *The Responsibility for Faith and Testimony.* The first responsibility considered was that for faith and testimony. The

Fifth Appearance:
to the Apostles,
and Others, Thomas
Being Absent
Luke 24:36-43
John 20:19-25
1 Cor. 15:5 (?)

Risen Lord laid special emphasis upon this responsibility first during His Fifth Appearance. This was His last time to appear on the first Easter Sabbath. The time was an early evening hour. The place was probably the Upper Room, where, as suggested in the close of the last chapter, the disciples of Jesus were probably gathered at this time.

All of the Eleven Apostles were present, except Thomas. At this time Jesus spoke definitely of the responsibility for faith and testimony.²

This Fifth Appearance took place while the assembled disciples were discussing the two reported appearances of Jesus, that to Peter, and that to the Two Disciples on the way to Emmaus: neither of which, as will be remembered from the previous chapter, was believed by the debating assembly. The disciples, it is practically certain, had gone to this meeting place by appointment.

Further Circumstances of the Fifth Appearance
Luke 24:36-37
John 20:19

Possibly it was their regular place of worship in the evening hour. Probably most of them had gone there with an eager desire to hear a full report of what had happened during the day. For fear of the Jews, as John has explained, they had locked the doors. While they were thus discussing events behind locked doors, Jesus appeared in their midst. They were, at first, greatly affrighted, supposing that they had seen a spirit. But Jesus

²Paul's reference, in *First Corinthians* 15:5, should probably be identified with the Fifth, Sixth, or Seventh Appearance of the Lord, as the outline is given in this chapter. But there is no means of making the identification certain in any one of the above appearances. Paul has simply stated, what was then a well understood fact, that the Risen Lord "was seen of Cephas, then of the Twelve." There are possible reasons for identifying this manifestation with any one of the three mentioned above. But it is also possible that this reference is to an occasion entirely different from any of the appearances recorded in the Gospels.

quickly quieted their fears with His benedictions of *Peace*. Then the Risen Lord took up, in definite order, the matters for which He had appeared to the assembled group at this time.

Christ first called upon those who were present to have faith in the Fact of the Resurrection. That was their first duty. They

1. Responsibility for Faith in the Resurrection
 Luke 24:38-43
 John 20:20

must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as risen from the dead. They must do so for their own sakes, and even more so for sake of the great work to which He was about to call them. This great first duty, the Lord urged upon His disciples in two different ways at this time.

By reproof first. Jesus desired first to clear the way for a definite faith. Most of the Apostles, and others, perhaps, were

(1) Reproof of Their Lack of Faith

even yet as Peter had been during the earlier part of that day. They were still wondering with themselves at the things which they

had seen and heard. Probably there were among them sharp debates and denials: for many of them still disbelieved that Christ had actually risen from the dead. Hence the Lord's first reproving questions, as quoted by Luke: "Why are ye troubled? And wherefore do reasonings arise in your hearts?"

By proof also. Christ reproved His hearers, in His first questions. He also challenged by them a receptive attitude on the

(2) Proofs As a Basis of Faith

part of His hearers. Then He gave to those present tangible proofs that He was not a spirit, as they had supposed; but that He was indeed the same Jesus Who had been crucified. He showed them His wounded Body, and said to them, "See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself: handle Me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me having."

The impression was effective for their faith. "The disciples were glad therefore when they saw the Lord." Luke has added that "they still disbelieved for joy, and wondered." But the Lord did not stop with one proof, but gave them a second. He desired to complete their conviction. Therefore He requested food, and did eat a piece of a broiled fish there in the presence of them all. This action of the Risen Lord seems to have confirmed the faith of those who were present on this occasion. Henceforth there is no account of doubt in any of their minds and hearts.

But faith, good as it was, was not enough. They must do more than merely believe. They must testify before the world. Espe-

cially was this an obligation upon the Apostles, who were chosen as special witnesses of Christ, and of His work as Savior. To this duty Christ turned the minds of His hearers in the second benediction of *Peace*, which John has recorded. The first pronouncement of *Peace* had reference to faith. It was an assurance from that love which casteth out all fear. It had calmed the doubts of those present.

2. Responsibility
for Testifying to
and for the Risen
Lord
John 20:21-23

But this second pronouncement of *Peace*³ turned the minds of those present toward the moral and spiritual consequences of the Resurrection. It pointed to the new obligations for service. From questions of doubt, speculation, and debate, Christ directed His hearers to think of the work of His own Kingdom in the world. He invited them, and urged them, to think at once of making His Cross effective among men and women in all the world.

Hence Christ emphasized the essentials of meeting this new obligation. He spoke of their divine commission, defining it clearly: "As the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." After saying this, He breathed upon them a benediction of His Holy Spirit. This was an earnest of the fuller power that they should receive for helping them to bear their testimony. Christ then defined for His disciples great spiritual authority, and results of divine favor and eternal life, which were to be wrought by and through themselves, as the exponents and messengers of faith in all the world.

Thus by defining the program, the equipment, and the results of a world-wide testimony, Christ called for a forward look into the second great responsibility consequent upon the Fact of the Resurrection: that of testimony in the Kingdom of the Risen and Sovereign Lord. Perhaps many of those present, as the Lord Jesus discussed these things, were awakened to a new and active sense of the obligations that rose out of their living faith in the Risen Savior.⁴

2. *The Responsibility for Faith and the Propagation of Blessedness.* Those present had been convinced by the evidence given by the Lord Himself during His Fifth Appearance. Yet

³This salutation of *Peace* may, with interest, be compared with the Lord's last words in the Upper Room, before He went out toward Gethsemane on the evening of His Arrest. See *John* 14:25-31.

⁴"Thomas, one of the Twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came." This "doubting Apostle" strongly asserted, when he had rejoined the group, that he would not believe in the Resurrection, except he had seen the Risen Lord, and personally examined His Body that was wounded. *John* 20:24-25.

there was room for sharp reproof. The disciples needed a more charitable confidence toward the testimony of one another. That

was to be an instrument in their future work.

Sixth Appearance: Perhaps they needed also a deepening of
to the Eleven,— their faith, such as would lead on to Blessed-
Thomas Present ness, and carry Blessedness to others. These
Mark 16:14 are the questions that were discussed when
John 20:26-31 the Lord came again to the Apostles, in His
1 Cor. 15: 5 (?) Sixth Appearance. The place was prob-

ably the same Upper Room, where the Apostles were all present, including Thomas. The time was one week after the Fifth Appearance. The Apostles were again assembled behind locked doors.

Mark's brief reference to this Sixth Appearance, for so it is best to regard his statement, asserts that this appearance was to "the Eleven themselves, as they sat at meat." This statement would seem to imply that only the Apostles were present on this occasion. That fact, if they alone were present, gives special point to the further statement of Mark in this connection. He

1. Sharp General
Reproof for Their
Previous
Lack of Faith
Mark 16:14
John 20:26

has added, making use of strong terms, that Jesus "upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them who had seen Him after He was risen."

The Lord's analysis here is full of interest. He censured the Apostles on two counts. He assigned their previous lack of faith to two conditions in them which He strongly condemned. The one was religious in nature, a matter of ingrained character. "He upbraided them with their unbelief."

(1) Two Counts
against the
Apostles

The other was personal and social. It was a sad lack of kindly attitude and working confidence among themselves. "He upbraided them with their hardness of heart, because they believed not them who had seen Him after He was risen." They had refused to believe a Fact, which was sufficiently well attested; and they had refused to believe witnesses who were fully competent to attest that Fact.

The Lord's purposes in this strong censure at that time may have been manifold. From the records it appears probable that every one of the Apostles had, in some measure, been guilty under one or both of these counts. There may also have been some of them across

(2) Manifold Pur-
pose in This
Censure of the
Apostles

whose minds there still fell fading shadows of doubt. The Lord thus set Himself to the purpose of finally clearing up the question of faith in the Fact of the Resurrection. Furthermore, He announced in this censure some general principles that were good for all time. He also standardized for all time the place and function of human testimony in the progress of His Kingdom in the world. Possibly also He desired to impress these important truths on this occasion, where He would have an opportunity to illustrate them by an immediate application.

From the first the immediate major reference of the Lord's reproof may have been directed toward Thomas. He had been

**2. Direct Special
Treatment of Unbe-
lieving Thomas
John 20:27-28**

absent when the Risen Lord had appeared to the Apostles one week before. In the meantime, as some have thought, Thomas had spent a tragic week in isolation and soul-numbing doubt. This last thought is specu-

lative; for no one can know now how Thomas had spent that intervening week, or why he had been absent on that previous occasion.

Yet the dual nature in Thomas makes this thought more than a mere guess. His second name, *Didymus* (meaning twin), suggests, and previous notes of him in the Gospels bear out the suggestion, that he was a man of a double nature and temperament.⁵

**(1) Dual Nature
of Thomas**

At times he was intense in love, and all ambition and enthusiasm. But on other occasions he was characterized by deep fear, and shrinking hesitation, by slow comprehension and melancholy doubt. Thomas accepted truth upon instruction, and upon concrete evidence. He accepted truths one at a time. But his mind was open and receptive. He modified his thought, his faith, and his conduct, according to the truths which he had accepted. His was a positive mind. He combined an attitude of firmness in doubt with a finality of faith in new truth that came to him well attested.⁶ His was the kind of spirit, therefore, upon which the eclipse of faith caused by the Death of Christ would fall with disaster, until the very Sun of Truth had again shone into his own soul.

⁵See John 11:16; 14:5; 20:25; and the study of the several Apostles, in Chapter VI.

⁶His openness to truth when it was well attested, and also his firmness in doubt, are strongly evident in his statement, "Except I see, . . . I will by no means believe," (John 20:25). Here was proof also that Thomas was not wholly skeptical, although he was in danger of becoming so, as was suggested by Christ's words, "become not faithless," for such is the proper meaning of the verb in that exhortation.

Such was Thomas on this occasion; and the Lord Jesus knew Thomas thoroughly. Therefore, after the benediction of *Peace*,

**(2) Christ's Ministry
of Evidence to
Thomas**

and the general reproof for unbelief, as previously studied in this chapter, Jesus turned directly to Thomas, and said to him, "Reach hither thy finger, and see My hands; and reach hither thy hand, and put it into My side; and be not faithless, but believing." It will be observed that Jesus here used almost the exact words that were used previously by Thomas in his strong affirmation of doubt. Possibly there was a suggestion in this fact that Thomas did not miss. Jesus here gave exactly what Thomas had desired as a support of his own faith;⁷ for the Lord knew that the heart of Thomas was open to the truth, and that, deep in his heart, was a desire to respond aright when the truth was well known.

With reverence, it may be said, that the Lord's accommodation of evidence was, in this instance, well rewarded. That is, the

**(3) Rebound of Con-
fidence on the Part
of Doubting Thomas**

result was exactly what the Lord Jesus had intended. Thomas, as it seems from the records, did not touch the Body of Jesus, though he had previously asserted that such touch would be necessary to his own faith. On the contrary, he was fully convinced by seeing the evidence presented. From the depths of gloomy unbelief, the spirit of Thomas leaped at once into the clearest light of conviction hitherto attained by any concerning the Son of God. With a full, complete, spontaneous, exultant, unreprieved, and uncorrected declaration of Christ's Divinity, Doubting Thomas exclaimed,

MY LORD AND MY GOD!

That exclamation expressed the climax of faith in the Gospel Records.⁸ It reached to the full realization of the Divine Nature of Jesus Christ, and adequately expressed that realization. It carries the mind back to the Throne of God in the eternal Past, whence John, in his introduction to the Gospel, saw the Son of God coming forth to save and bless those who would put their faith in Him. That was a great moment with Thomas. He had attained to the full condition of all true blessedness. His triumph

⁷This exact grant of what Thomas desired may be contrasted with the instance when the Savior refused to grant a "sign" to the scribes and Pharisees, who had asked for a "sign" in order that they might believe. See Chapter V, page 101; and "Sign," and "Scribes and Pharisees," in the Index.

⁸Compare these three expressions of faith: "God" (*John* 1:1); "Lamb of God" (*John* 1:29); "Son of God" (*Matthew* 16:16, a truth for the revelation of which the Gospels were written—*John* 20:31); "Lord God" (*John* 20:28).

of faith was complete. The Divine, and therefore Risen, Lord was his own Divine and personal Savior.⁹

But faith, even in its rarest moments of triumph, is not a personal luxury. At once, therefore, Christ associated this triumphant experience of Thomas with the thought of world-wide responsibility. The Lord exalted the duty of extending, through testimony and faith, the blessedness of that moment to all the world. "Because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed," He said

**3. Responsibility
for Promoting the
Blessedness of
Faith in Christ
John 20:29**

to Thomas: "blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."¹⁰

Thomas had been favored with a rare and convincing personal experience. Was he ready for the commensurate responsibility? That was his challenge in this statement of Jesus. Upon the general answer to that question the world must depend. The world's faith was appointed to be the fruitage of testimony. The truth of Christ must be held forth. Moses and the Prophets must be expounded, so that the Spirit of God may show the things of Christ to the hearts of men. The unfolding witness of the Apostles, and of others, to the Nature of Christ, and the Fact and the meaning of His Resurrection, must not fail. Thus again, in this comprehensive suggestion, Christ turned the minds of His Apostles to the future: to the fields ready for the harvest, to the glory of the work of the Lord, and to the great obligation of passing on the blessings of His Kingdom to the heart of the waiting, perishing world.

John, who was always sensitive to the truth, deeply felt the meaning of this suggested obligation. He has given a noble response in the two verses which he added to his account of this incident. He had himself come to the truth by way of the testimony of Truth itself. His statements in these two added verses are not a preliminary close to his Gospel, as some have supposed: for he has much yet to say that follows in

**John's Noble Re-
sponse to the Duty
of Testifying for
Christ to
All the World
John 20:30-31**

logical order, as will appear in the later outlines of this chapter. These statements belong to this situation; and his thoughts fit perfectly into the logic of his narrative at this point.

That moment was one of blessedness to the Apostles. They had

⁹Here was an effective vindication of Christ against His enemies, who had proclaimed the people ignorant and accursed because they believed in Jesus. See *John* 7:49.

¹⁰*1. Peter* 1:8-9.

seen and had believed. Christ had suggested the obligations of testifying, so that future ages might believe also, and thus share that blessedness. "Yes," said John in effect; "that is exactly what I am doing. That is why I have written this account of the Gospel. This is my Testimony to the world. It is partial, I know, since it is only a selection of events. But it is written with the Master's own thought in mind. I have written these things in order *that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in His Name.* These are my words to help those, in all ages, who cannot see the Risen Lord as Thomas has done, yet to believe on Him, and to attain that blessedness of which He has just spoken."

These words of John were a logical reflection upon his own testimony, as he felt it to be related to the responsibility which he had just recorded as a suggestion from the Lord himself. This passage is especially interesting as being another instance in which John has quoted his own previous thought, or the substance of it. Here again he has reflected the conviction which he had arrived at while in the Lord's empty Tomb: that the Divine Nature of Jesus carried within itself the necessity of a Resurrection. Hence John at this time, passing beyond the thought of the Resurrection, went directly to the Divine Nature of Jesus Christ as the effective center of all saving faith.

That was the center and substance of John's testimony to the Risen Lord: He was Divine, the Son of God. Being Divine, He has risen from the dead: for He must have done so. A Divine Christ can save and bless. A Divine Christ will save and bless. A Divine Christ does save and bless. Let the world read the words of this testimony, and put its faith in the Son of God. That was John's thought, when he was writing the Gospel, of the way in which he was then meeting this great responsibility which the Risen Lord had laid upon the hearts of the Apostles.

IV. The Call of the Resurrection for the Complete Dedication of the Apostles to the Work of Christ's Kingdom

There is but one power known to men that can enable life to rise to the noble responsibilities which Christ set before His Apostles in the Fifth and Sixth Appearances, which occurred respectively on the first Easter Day evening, and one week later. That power is a consecrating love that leads to a complete dedication of self to the work of Christ's Kingdom.

"Behold, I am Alive
For Evermore."
Revelation 1:18

It was to the fruitage of such a love that Christ called His Apostles in the Seventh and Eighth Appearances, which are now to be considered. In the first of these Christ made the Call to dedication. In the other He definitely and powerfully fortified the Apostles, thus set apart, for the work to which He had called them.

1. The Apostles Called from Their Old Work to Devote Themselves Completely to the Work of Christ. Such was the

Seventh Appearance: Lord in His Seventh Appearance. This to Seven Apostles at the Sea of Galilee

John 21:1-25

1. Cor. 15:5 (?)

central purpose accomplished by the Risen Lord was a manifestation of Himself to Seven of His Disciples, probably all of them Apostles. The Appearance occurred at the Sea of Galilee, which was here called "the Sea of Tiberias." The story of this event was told

by John, in a passage that is somewhat complicated. The meaning of the Appearance seems best understood in the light of these two principal facts: the Apostles had here returned to their old work as fishermen; and the Risen Lord called them to devote themselves completely to His work.

This was the Lord's Third Appearance to the Apostles as a group since His Resurrection. The time of this appearance has

1. Graphic Setting of the Seventh Appearance and Its Call to Dedication

not been given; but it must have been several days after the Sixth Appearance, which was at Jerusalem. The whole situation at this time was somewhat dramatic. The graphic details of the setting, leading up to this

important Call, may be reviewed under the following topics.

The Apostles, after having waited several days, possibly for the revival of faith in Thomas, had at length returned from

(1) Return of Apostles to Their Old Work

John 21:1-3

Jerusalem to Galilee. Simon Peter, who was probably discouraged with the long wait for something definite to happen, decided to turn again to his nets as a fisherman. When he announced his intention, he found those with

him ready to fall in with his own suggestion. Those who thus felt the old call of the sea were, besides himself, Thomas and Nathanael, James and John, and two others not named, but generally thought to be Andrew and Philip. They all went forth to the Sea of Galilee, and fished all night; but they caught nothing throughout the night.

When dawn came, Jesus stood on the shore; but He was unknown to the Apostles.¹¹ In a familiar manner, as if further

to obscure His identity, Jesus said, "Lads, have you aught to eat?" They answered Him, "No." Then He commanded them to

(2) Appearance of
Jesus, and His
Recognition
John 21:4-8

"cast the net on the right side of the boat," assuring them that they should there catch fish in the net. They did as He had commanded them, and were not able to draw the net for the multitude of fishes.

The effect was immediate. John was the first to understand. He said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" Peter's conviction, when he heard this from John, issued at once into action. Fastening his coat about him, Peter sprang out into the sea, expecting to wade, or to swim if necessary, to the shore where the Lord was standing. But the other Disciples, who were about one hundred yards out at sea, toiled at the net, which was filled, as they later learned, with one hundred and fifty-three fishes. At length they succeeded in dragging it unbroken to the shore. In this manner the entire group came to the shore where the Lord was standing, while He exercised a divine supervision over the situation before him.

"So when they got out upon the land, they see a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread. Jesus said unto them,

(3) Breakfast for
the Disciples:
Jesus as Their Host
John 21:9-14

'Bring of the fish which ye have now taken.' " And when they had done as Jesus had commanded, He said unto them, "Come and break your fast." Perhaps He was not yet in His natural form and likeness; but a feel-

ing of awe and reverence took possession of the Apostles. None of them dared to ask Him who He was, "knowing that it was the Lord." Then He took the bread and fish, and served the hungry Disciples, while they ate what He had provided for them." Such was the manner of the Seventh Appearance of the Risen Lord. As soon as the morning meal was completed, Jesus took up the question of the Call to service, for the making of which He had appeared on this occasion.

This Call to complete dedication to the Lord's work is full of absorbing interest. The record of it is given in the complicated passage marked in the margin of this paragraph. This passage

¹¹From reports and past experiences, the Apostles should have been prepared for spiritual appearances. Possibly the plain human likeness of Jesus at this time was confusing. But that was a common fact with Jesus. To Mary Magdalene, He had appeared as the gardener; to the Two Disciples on the way to Emmaus, as an ordinary traveler; and to the Apostles at this time, probably as a common fisherman of the sea. See Chapter XXVII, note 20; and XXIX, note 2.

¹²How was this meal provided? Some suppose that Jesus provided it by His creative power. Some suppose that angels prepared it, at His command. Some suppose that Peter prepared it before his comrades had reached the shore with the boat and the net. The natural supposition is that Jesus had, in some way, made ready this meal Himself.

is one through which eloquent pens have labored, and wept, and soared. Calmer analysis, however, may see in this passage three

**2. Nature and
Method of Christ's
Call for Complete
Dedication**
John 21:15-25

parallel thoughts, all dealing with the Call in which Christ set apart the Apostles exclusively to an apostolical ministry. Here in parallel columns, as it were, Christ made the Call of the Apostles complete, defining it in terms of the work, the workers, and

the kind of devotion which the work of His Kingdom would require at their hands.

Before working out this parallelism in the Lord's Call to dedication, it will be well to look a moment at two other facts that

**The Typical Ele-
ment in This Call**

are plainly discoverable in the passage containing this Call. The first of these is the typical character of this Call. The Lord made

this Call through His own treatment of the Apostle Peter; but it is plain that this treatment of Peter, which was intensely personal, was also typical, and so meant to apply to all of the Apostles. They so regarded it, as the passage clearly shows; and they appropriated and applied its intense personal message severally to themselves as members of the general group of the Apostles.

The other fact to which attention is here directed is the general restorative element in this situation. That was the function of

**The Restorative
Element in
This Call**

the large memory-reviving values in the thrice-repeated question to Peter. This was the more effective for all the group because it was made so pointed and personal in the

case of Peter. Here was the effective final correction of Peter's doubts, and fears, and previous denials; and these were matters in respect to which Peter stood not alone among those who were then present; for the Apostles, except John, had all forsaken their Lord in His hours of sorrow. But Peter was the most public and pronounced in his denials, and the most overt sinner in the group. For this reason, it may be supposed, the Lord selected Peter at this time as the one through whom to correct and restore them all. This personal treatment of Peter was an instance of typical and complete and final adjustment of old troubles which doubtless weighed upon the hearts of all the Apostles. From this time onward, the old scores of weakness and failure were permanently laid aside, except as they lingered as a seasoning grace in the memories of the several Apostles.¹⁸

¹⁸Compare the reflection of Peter's melancholy memory in *2. Peter* 3:17; and also in *Mark* 14:66-72. See also *Acts* 3:14, and *2. Peter* 2:1, both of which show Peter's sensitiveness to the enormity of his sin in denying his Lord and Savior.

With these preliminary matters in mind, the reader is now asked to consider the parallel thoughts in this great Call to complete dedication to the work of Christ's Kingdom.

In the first of these parallel thoughts, the Lord defined this typical Call, through Peter, in terms of the work for which the

Lord was setting apart the Apostles. This work was of three different kinds. To Peter, at the several points of progress in this Call, the Lord said, (1) "Feed My lambs;" (2)

"Tend (rule, or shepherd) My sheep;" and (3) "Feed My little sheep." These variations of the Lord's words were certainly neither accidental nor indifferent. They were used to signify the three great constructive aspects of the ministry of Christ's Kingdom, to which He was here summoning the entire energies of the Apostles.

There are the three distinct classes of ministry in the Kingdom which the Lord has here suggested; and to these, as here suggested, the energies of the Kingdom should be completely set apart.

First, "*Feed My Lambs.*" In this first command, the Lord was, almost certainly, referring to the new young converts who had been brought into the Kingdom. These were the spiritual children of the Kingdom. Probably He included here also the younger people and children who naturally belonged to the Kingdom. These new young converts and the children were the lambs of the fold. They were the first care of the Church. For them a suitable testimony, and instruction, and training, and nurture in the Lord, had to be provided. That was the first work to which Jesus here called the Apostles.

Second, "*Tend (rule, or shepherd) My sheep.*" In this command, there is a note of strength which suits best to the ministry of the Kingdom to those who are more mature in the Christian life. *Tend* My sheep. *Shepherd* them. *Rule* them. So may the verb here used by Jesus be variously rendered. It suggests the strong ministry in the Word of God, the pastoral care of the people, the organization and direction of the growing Kingdom, and the utilizing of the human resources of the Kingdom for the advancements and conquests of the Truth in the hearts of the unsaved. That was the second work to which Jesus here called the Apostles.

Third, "*Feed My little sheep.*" This commandment was one of peculiar tenderness. It will be noticed that Jesus said *My little sheep*, and not *My lambs*. The reference seems to be clear and definite. The Lord commanded that particular ministry necessary

for those older Christians who had a weak and struggling faith. Especially would this command apply to those older persons who had a young faith. These last had in their old days changed their old faith for the new. This experience was full of eternal joy; but there was in it also a human pathos which touched the Savior's heart in a peculiar manner. He knew, with perfect knowledge, what such a change of faith meant to the individual.¹⁴ This class of Christians, more tenderly than all others, needed instruction in the truth, patient direction in service, and general guidance and encouragement in their new way of life. That was the third work to which Jesus here called the Apostles.

The Lord defined His Call in terms of the workers. The minister who is qualified for the varied, delicate, and extensive work to which Jesus was here calling the Apostles must be a man whose heart is filled with love: for love is the origin, the motive power, and the ultimate end of the Kingdom of Christ and of its work in saving the world.¹⁵ This idea of love, in its double expression, as explained below, the Lord used here to define and reveal the kind of workers that He could use in the great work to which He was here calling the Apostles.

The Lord was defining His Call in terms of the workers. The definition was worked out through the Lord's repeated questions and Peter's persistent answers. The situation was intimately personal; but the treatment and results were typical. Because of certain pronounced facts in Peter's recent past, the Lord chose to convey, in a typical manner, His message to all the group of the Apostles in and through His searching treatment of Peter on this occasion. The Lord had a three-fold purpose in His repeated questions.

First, Christ was thus discovering and exhibiting the true heart

¹⁴See pages 114, 384, 394-395, 692. For an ideal fulfillment of this schedule of service, see Paul's review of his own work, in *Acts* 20:17-38.

¹⁵Since the line of parallel thoughts turns, at this point, upon the effective use of the two words for *love*, as they were used by the Lord and by Peter, it is necessary to define those words, and to show when each word is used. The word for *love* which Christ used in His first and second questions to Peter was the Greek verb *agapan*. This verb means *to esteem worthy*. It carries the idea of conviction and confidence, *plus* exaltation of the one loved. It carries also the idea of admiration and of submission, such as should characterize the right attitude toward the person who was thus exalted. The other verb used at this time was the Greek verb *philein*. This signifies *affection*. The verb means *to love with tender and intimate personal devotion*. The use of the two verbs, in the three questions of Christ to Peter, was as follows:

Christ's Questions

1. *Agapan* (emphasized)
2. *Agapan*
3. *Philein*

Peter's Answers

- Philein*
Philein
Philein (emphasized)

of Peter, which was revealed more in the inner promptings of his words than in what he actually said. Christ asked three questions: "Lovest (see Note 15) thou Me more than these?" "Lovest thou Me?" and "Lovest (see Note 15) thou Me?" In these questions there was a descent from a love of *superior exaltation*, to a love of *ordinary exaltation*, and finally to a love of *intimate personal affection*. In this descent the Lord was locating, deeper than his outward words, the true heart of Peter. This downward scale was very important and effective, as will presently appear.

Second, Christ was here using the most effective method possible for reviving and clarifying two truths which the Apostles had previously learned, or should have learned. By thus repeating this question of love, Christ effectively revived all of that pre-Crucifixion attachment and personal affection which the Apostles had for Jesus, and for the expression of which the verb used by Peter was splendidly appropriate. At the same time, by insisting upon the other expression of love, which exalts its object as a person enthroned and worshipped, Christ suggested that a new order in the economy of His Kingdom had come to pass. The time of His glorification had come; and right love to Him must exalt Him accordingly.

Finally, therefore, by His repeated questions, Christ was setting forth the new attitude which was necessary in those who would serve effectively in the varied ministry to which He was here calling the Apostles. The new order of work in His Kingdom required men with a world-wide outlook, and with faith and fortitude and devotion that would make them conquerors of the world in and through the Kingdom of Christ.

So far the Lord's searching questions have been thought of as one question three times repeated. But that was not the case.

b. Character-Revealing Replies to the Questions of Jesus Jesus asked three separate and distinct questions, which were intended to search out the depths of character in Peter and in the other Apostles. The gradation of these three questions made them an effective search for those qualities in men with which the Lord could link up the supreme Call of His Kingdom. The several responses of Peter show how successfully the Lord found that for which He was seeking.

In the first question Jesus asked, "*Simon, Son of John, lovest (exaltest) thou Me more than these?*" To this inquiry Peter answered, "*Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love (am dearly devoted to) Thee.*" Jesus asked whether Peter now accorded to the Risen Lord a superior exaltation, even above that of the other

Apostles. The question touched the depths of Peter's heart: for it echoed at once both his famous confession¹⁶ and his melancholy

(a) Peter's Response to the First Question
John 21:15

denials. What was Peter's present thought of Christ? What was Peter's present condition of heart? On either count, was Peter now qualified for the great Call to Dedication, which the Lord was even then admin-

istering? Were the other Apostles also qualified? That was what the first question signified.

The answer of Peter was satisfactory. The vivid revival of his past experience denied to him an answer under the first count of the above question. In view of his own past, he would not commit himself to an expression of that exalting love which he knew to be necessary, and doubtless now felt more than ever in all his life, toward his Risen Lord and Savior. But he did reveal, from the deep of his devoted heart, the same usable love, making it plain through the humility that was evident in his softened non-committal reply. Peter did love; but he also had learned. He was humble in his devotion, especially in view of his uncertain adjustment to a new truth: namely, that the Kingdom of Christ is built up by spiritual power, and not by loud words.¹⁷ Recognizing what these facts signified in the heart of Peter, Jesus commanded him to feed the lambs.

Then the Lord dropped the note of superiority which He had used in the first question. He descended to the level of common

(b) Peter's Response to the Second Question
John 21:16

apostleship. Speaking in terms of mere fact, He asked Peter the second question: "*Simon, Son of John, lovest (exaltest, as a matter of fact) thou Me (with the confidence and admiration due to Me)?*" But the lesson of

humility had taken a deeper hold upon Peter's soul as he had meditated upon the past. He therefore answered again, exactly as he had done before, except that he added a touch of emphasis upon the integrity of his own personal devotion. He said to Jesus, "*Yea, Lord; Thou knowest that I love (do love) Thee (dearly).*"

There should be no thought that Peter was at all lacking in his love for Jesus, and in his desire to honor the Lord. The opposite was certainly true. But Peter's profound humility forbade him at this time to make any claim or profession other than this statement of endearing personal attachment. This he felt no one could question. The Lord saw, however, the deeper spirit that

¹⁶See *Matthew* 16:16; and Chapter XXVII, Note 27 above.

¹⁷See *1. Corinthians* 4:19-20, and *1. Thessalonians* 1:5.

determined Peter's response, and knew that it was such as would safely bear the responsibilities of the Kingdom. Therefore, out of fitting recognition of what He had discovered, the Lord assigned to Peter the sympathetic leadership and encouragement of those who were doing the Lord's work.

Then came the unexpected. Jesus, by a third question, pitched on the lower level of Peter's former replies, tested the very integrity of Peter's claim to a deep personal devotion to the Lord. Without Himself doubting Peter's love, Jesus again asked, but with a change in His verb for love, "*Simon, Son of John, lovest thou (dost thou indeed love)*

(c) Peter's Response to the Third Question
John 21:17

Me (dearly, as thou has said)?" This third question, in its searching personal form, touched the heart of Peter as he had not hitherto been touched. He replied, "*Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee.*"

This third question was very effective. It brought forth that which had been, as the Lord well knew, in the heart of Peter all

Peter's Final Exaltation of Christ

the while—the faith and love that exalts the Lord in a manner necessary to the new work of His world-wide Kingdom. Peter did this by the words in which he expressed the argument of his heart's devotion. There is also an intermediate suggestion here, that, when the Lord had thus looked into the deepest heart of Peter, and looked with a question, Peter was forced to think more of *the Lord*, and less of *himself*, than he had been doing. The results were double.

First, Peter's strong reply was a humble confession. It was equivalent to his having said: "Yes, Lord, Thou knowest all about it. Thou knowest that, above all weakness, and beyond all denials, and more clearly even than in any previous professions, I love Thee. Take me, dear Lord, just as I am, weakness, failures, and all; for I do love Thee!" The deeper meaning of his words implies both this confession and this prayer for acceptance, and merciful patience, and that he may be used of the Lord.

Again, Peter at last rightly exalted the Lord. "Lord, Thou knowest all things." Peter exalted Jesus here as *Lord*, and then carefully used a word for *knowing* that means *to have absolute knowledge*, such as a God should have. "Thou knowest that I love Thee." This word for *knowing* is a different verb. It means *to come to know, to learn by experience*. Thus, in his argument, Peter had gotten back into his pre-Crucifixion relations with Christ at their very best. Peter knew his Lord, and was close

to Him. Peter was again *the Rock* upon which a Divine Kingdom could be built.¹⁸

By these searching questions the Lord had finally found that in Peter which was sincere and true, and which needed never again to be questioned. It was an exaltation of Jesus as Divine, and a close personal affection for Him. Upon this the Lord could depend for any service, even for the delicate ministry of feeding the "little sheep" of His sacred fold. This treatment of Peter was typical. In him was discovered those things that God wanted in all of the Apostles. Typical also were the results. The good of the past had been fully conserved. The imperfection of the past had been forgiven. The truth, as it applied to Peter, applied to them all. Henceforth Christ was fully ready to speak to them about their active devotion to Him and His work for the future.

Already, as a prologue to the Call which Christ was making at this time for complete dedication, He had suggested, through the

- (3) Call Defined in Terms of the Devotion Required
John 21:18-25

the work assigned, and of certain qualifications for that work. In this last instance, He has defined the Call in terms of the devotion to which He was calling the Apostles.

That devotion must be complete. The Apostles were to forsake their old work, to which they had again turned, and devote

- a. Devotion Complete, Even unto Death

John 21:18-19a

their whole time, and their full energies, to this work of propagating the Kingdom of Christ. This truth was first symbolized in Christ's reference to the manner of Peter's death: for he should, in his devotion unto death, thus glorify God. In the old days, when Peter was young, he followed his old occupation, working out his own plans, and girding himself for the work which he then had in mind. Henceforth, his devotion should be to the work of the Lord, submitting his will, in all things, even to the point of being a willing sacrifice for Christ's sake, unto the will of his Lord and Master and Savior.

That devotion must be to the leadership of Christ. - The completeness of this devotion, which the Lord had emphasized to

¹⁸Peter used two different verbs here,—*oída* and *gignosko*, which differ in meaning as described above.

¹⁹See this point as previously discussed in The Sermon on the Mount (*Matthew* 5:1-16; 6:24-34); in the Mission of the Twelve (*Matthew* 10:1-42); and in the Mission of the Seventy (*Matthew* 11:20-30; *Luke* 10:1-24).

Peter, was applicable alike to all of the Apostles. They so understood the Lord's meaning at that time. There was therefore no

**b. Devotion to the
Leadership of
Christ**
John 21:19b

break in their thought, but only a continuous flow of it out into action, in the next point of progress in this Call from the Master. Jesus said to Peter "*Follow Me.*" They all heard this summons, and applied it to

themselves. Some of them even made an immediate active response, as the sequel will show. These words, "*Follow Me,*" were an official call. In answer to them Christ meant for the Apostles to forsake their own work then in hand, and to devote themselves to the work of His Kingdom. Henceforth they were to work wholly under the leadership of their Risen Lord and Savior and King. They understood His Call, and henceforth devoted themselves to His work.

Finally, this was a Call for devotion to individual responsibility. This they must severally assume. This truth was here emphasized

**c. Devotion to and
under Individual
Responsibility**
John 21: 20-23

in a singular circumstance, which called forth a word of correction from the Lord to Peter. It is plain that the Lord's reference to the manner of Peter's death had made a deep impression. That was a new note in His plans

for the Apostles. It was therefore more than an idle question which Peter asked, when he, having turned about, saw John following Jesus in response to the general element in the Lord's Call. Looking directly upon John, Peter said to Jesus, "*Lord, and what shall this man do?*"

Peter was doubtless thinking in terms of the great Call, and prospect, which Jesus had laid out for Peter's own life, and service, and death, that should glorify God. That was the program for Peter, who had been *called back into the Lord's favor*, as the Apostles then felt! What honors, therefore, would be fitting to John, who had *never forsaken* his Lord! Possibly Peter was thinking also of the old request of Salome, that her two sons, James and John, might have exalted places in the Kingdom of the Lord.²⁰ Whatever his promptings, Peter was asking about a matter that rests alone with the secrets of the Lord. This matter had nothing at all to do with Peter's own work in the Lord's Kingdom.

Therefore the Lord called Peter back at once to a sense of his own individual responsibility. Christ's words were sharp, and full of significant emphasis. Turning to Peter, Jesus said, "*If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou Me.*"²¹

²⁰See Matthew 20:20-28, and pages 428-430.

The appointments and responsibilities of John were individual, and not a matter of speculative concern to Peter. His serious concern should be to meet the individual obligations of his own appointments under the Lord Jesus. His duty was to follow the Lord, with his eyes upon *the Lord*, and not upon the labors and rewards of other men. Christ's answer to Peter meant that Peter, and all other ambassadors of the Cross, should devote themselves to the personal responsibilities of their own lives and work, remembering their direct responsibilities to the Lord.

Thus the Apostles were called from other work, and set apart wholly to the work of Christ's Kingdom in the world. With this thought John brought his account of the Gospel to a fitting close. The end is not abrupt, as some have supposed; for he had fully completed his purpose. "And there are many other things," said John, in his conclusion, "which Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written."

That was the right final word to his Gospel. As in *John* 20:30-31, he had previously stated his purpose in writing this account of the Gospel, so in these last verses of the book John defended himself historically for having written as he had done. He had written for a definite purpose. To that end he had deliberately selected his materials. With great enthusiasm, he recognized, in these final words, the infinite wealth of materials which he had left untouched.²² In this brief statement John justified his evident purpose, which was to supplement the already current, and accepted, and widely read accounts of the Gospel as written by Matthew, and Mark, and Luke. And having done that, John closed his book, leaving infinite treasures of truth untold.

²¹John has explained that, out of this statement of the Lord, there grew up a tradition that he himself should not die. Possibly that idea grew out of a current feeling that John's honors should exceed those here outlined for Peter, and that *translation*, such as was accorded to Enoch and Elijah, would alone rightly reward the superior fidelity of John. But the Apostle of love, who sought no self-exaltation and earthly renown, has himself made the correction.

²²It has been observed that John was here speaking only of the untouched abundance of materials in the Human Life of the Lord Jesus, since John has used only the name *Jesus*. This would leave uncounted the Divine fullness of Christ's eternal life and activity before His Incarnation.

The reader will appreciate the following statement about John's "enthusiastic sense of the inexhaustible fullness of the human life of the blessed Lord. The whole redeeming life, word, and work of the Word made flesh had a quality of infinity about it. The entire evangelic narrative has only touched the fringe of this vast manifestation, a few hours or days of the incomparable life. Every moment of it was infinitely rich in its contents, in its suggestions, in its influence. Every act was a revelation of the Father, of the Son, of the Holy Spirit, giving vistas into the eternities, and opening into the heart and bosom of Deity . . . The infinite abundance of the teaching and significance of the blessed life of the Son of God is ample justification of the apostolic enthusiasm."

2. *Love Fortified in Its Devotion to the Kingdom of Christ.*

The Eighth Appearance of the Risen Lord, in all probability, was that in which the Lord appeared to "above five hundred brethren at once." That was probably the next after the appearance on the shores of Galilee. However, there is no mention of date or place for this event, except the words *after that*, in Paul's record in *First Corinthians*, which would seem clearly to place this appearance soon after the Fifth, Sixth, or Seventh.²³

The inner logic of this great public manifestation of the Risen Lord would certainly, as it seems, place the event at this point in the Resurrection Period. The underlying progress of events was ripe for such an Appearance. After the Call which Jesus had laid upon the hearts of the Apostles, there was need of this strong popular testimony in corroboration of the message which the Apostles should carry to an unbelieving world. Even the very love in them which responded to the Lord's Call needed this strong popular support, in order that they might go forth with confidence to meet the world, dedicating their lives fully to the conquests and advancement of Christ's Kingdom.

On the negative side, there is no valid reason for identifying this Appearance with the next one considered below, nor with any other recorded in the Gospels. The only record of this event is that by Paul, in the marginal reference above. In that Scripture, Paul stated that Christ "was seen of Cephas, then of the Twelve; after that, He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep."

1. Unique Record of This Appearance

There was a special evidential strength in this Eighth Appearance of the Risen Lord as it has been recorded. It was not mentioned in the Gospel records; but they were written later. Paul's account of this and other appearances, in *First Corinthians*, was the first inspired record of the appearances of the Risen Lord. This record, with its citation of half a thousand witnesses, was written within about twenty-five years of the event recorded, and while most of the witnesses were still alive.

2. Great Evidential Strength of This Appearance

This unique record was, therefore, Paul's daring appeal to the living witnesses of his own day, and his powerful challenge to the faith of all ages of the world since his day. It is almost cer-

²³See Note 2 in this chapter above.

tain that this "cloud of witnesses" had much to do with Paul's own powerful confidence in the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.²⁴ It is also almost equally certain that Paul had this Great Appearance in mind when he affirmed that King Agrippa must have known about the Resurrection; "for this thing," as Paul then said, "was not done in a corner."²⁵

Possibly this Eighth Appearance, in all of its great public proportions, was planned by the Lord and His Apostles, after He had called them in the Seventh Appearance, and while they were lingering still by the Sea of Galilee. He had there held an important conference with them; and this appearance was a natural sequel to the inner meaning of that conference. Jesus had called the Apostles permanently to the work of witnessing for Him. That was to be their life-work.

The Lord therefore made their testimony strong. He surrounded them, and supported their testimony, by the multitude of competent witnesses to whom He showed Himself on this great public occasion. Such a manifestation of Himself left no place for doubt or question. The Apostles were fully prepared to give their own official testimony as to the things which they had seen and heard. That was a powerful testimony. But the Lord Jesus, by this massive host of witnesses, provided for supporting the integrity of the Apostles, and the correctness of their testimony respecting the Risen Savior.

The Fact of the Resurrection was therefore attested by both the ancient and the modern methods of testifying. The latter method multiplies individual testimony in support of a fact. The former adduced a witness to the fact, and then sought support of the integrity of that witness. The Resurrection, being supported by the double strength of both methods of testimony, began to be, from about this time, a thing of unquestioned confidence and of power in the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. And from this Call in the Seventh and Eighth Appearances, the Apostles began to give their full time to the work and interests of Christ's Kingdom.

²⁴Paul said that Jesus appeared to "above five hundred brethren." But that says nothing of others. Paul himself may have been present on that great occasion. Jesus had appointed a meeting with the Apostles in Galilee after the Resurrection. The chief priests and the scribes, who knew well that Jesus had risen from the dead, probably had out their spies now in Galilee, as they had done before the Crucifixion. This public appearance would likely have been the one above all others when they would have been present. Furthermore, it is not improbable that Jesus did appear once at least to His old and defeated enemies. However, the records do not say that they ever saw Him after the Resurrection. (Cf. Chapter XXVII, Note 6).

²⁵See *Acts* 26:26.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE LAST CONFERENCES CONCERNING THE KINGDOM

"The Kingdom shall be the Lord's." *Obadiah v. 21.*

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own Blood." *Acts 20:28.*

"Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time." *Colossians 4:5.*

"He which converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death." *James 5:20.*

"I am the Vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing." *John 15:5.*

"We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." *2. Corinthians 4:5.*

This chapter concludes the conferences which Christ held with the Apostles concerning His Kingdom during the Resurrection

**"Declared the Son
of God with Power
. . . by the Resur-
rection from the
Dead." Romans 1:4**

Period. Two things remained yet to be accomplished. The Apostles had been recalled, from common labor, to full-time work in the Kingdom. Their personal testimony had also been fully fortified, by more than five hundred additional witnesses. But the final

commission in the larger work of the Kingdom had not yet been given to the Apostles. Neither had the Lord Jesus re-ascended to His Universal Throne in Heaven, whence He should administer the Kingdom for which He was "declared to be the Son of God with power." Christ was yet to be "highly exalted, and given a Name that is above every name," that His Kingship and His Divine Nature may be fully acknowledged by all intelligences.

These final conferences were held during the last three appearances of the Risen Lord before His Ascension, the last of the

**"For Thine is the
Kingdom, and the
Power, and the
Glory For Ever."
Cf. Psalm 22:27-31**

three being prolonged into that great final event. The Lord's theme during these concluding conferences was the work of His Kingdom in its two great universal aspects. In the first of the three appearances especially, did Christ discuss that work as related

to the eternal purposes of God. In the last of the three, He discussed that work as the program of the Church in the evangelization of the world.

V. The Work of Christ's Kingdom as Related to God's Eternal Purposes

Jesus Christ was from above. His Life-Work issued from the Throne of God. It was logical therefore that Christ should think of His work always from that Heavenly point of view. It was logical also that He should consider the work of His Kingdom first from the standpoint of God's eternal purposes.

1. *The Appointed Conference on the Kingdom with the Apostles in Galilee.* This Heavenly aspect of His Kingdom and its

**Ninth Appearance:
to the Eleven on
a Mountain in
Galilee**

Matthew 28:16-20

Mark 16:15-18

work Christ considered in His Ninth Appearance, when He manifested Himself to the Eleven Apostles in Galilee. Few introductory facts of this Appearance have been recorded.

The place was in Galilee, on a mountain, possibly Mount Tabor, though the exact mountain is still a matter of conjecture. The time was soon after the Eighth Appearance. Matthew has expressly stated that this meeting was the one which the Lord, before His Death, had appointed with the Apostles, and of which He had reminded them by special messages after His Resurrection.¹

This meeting with the Apostles was, therefore, an official conference. External circumstances have been suppressed in the records. The Lord Jesus, at the beginning of the meeting, received the worship of the Apostles. After that, He proceeded at once to the great purpose for which He had appointed this particular conference. His desire was to discuss with the Apostles, in this formal manner, their work as part of that Universal Kingdom which was appointed by the Father to the Son of God from the foundation of the world.²

Christ began this conference in a formal manner, by announcing Himself to be the Supreme King and Ruler of the Universe.

**1. CHRIST the
KING of Kings and
LORD of Lords**

Matthew 28:18

1. Tim. 6:14-16

"All power (authority) hath been given unto Me in Heaven and on Earth." This was not a new truth in Israel, as will appear from the next footnote below; nor was it a new utterance on the part of the Lord Jesus Christ.

On the contrary, He had felt this truth and taught it, and exercised such power and authority, from the earliest days of His public ministry.

¹See *Matthew* 26:32; 28:7, 10; and *Mark* 14:28; 16:7.

²There are few circumstances recorded in this instance. The meeting was official, and not evidential. The "doubts" of some, mentioned by Matthew, questioned the identity of Jesus, and not the Fact of the Resurrection. [See Chapter XXVII,

In the Sacred Scriptures, from the earliest times, all dominion, and power, and authority, was ascribed to Jehovah, as Author, and Owner, and Sovereign Ruler of the world, and of all things related thereto. Gradually, from ancient times, God has revealed that this sovereign power of Jehovah should be vested in His Own Son, Whom the Father should send into the world as the Messiah (Anointed One) and Savior of the world. This Mesisah-King was appointed to be born into the world through the House and Lineage of David, the great typical King, who foreshadowed the Christ.

These things were fulfilled in Christ. The Gospel Writers insist upon this truth. Jesus of Nazareth, the Divine-Human Son of Mary, was the Royal Fulfillment of God's plans for a Messiah. Christ Himself was fully conscious of this truth. He affirmed that He was sent of the Father to be such a King, and all the powers, prerogatives and functions of Divine and universal Kingship were committed to Him. Paul and the other writers of the New Testament have constantly declared and affirmed that all of God's sovereign purposes of grace, of providence, and of judgment, are administered and executed through Jesus Christ, Who is enthroned with His Father in Heaven, and is the Sovereign Ruler of all things. Christ does reign, and shall reign until God's purposes have been fully accomplished.³

These exalted thoughts were familiar to all devout Jews. Jesus may have analyzed the fuller meaning of His Kingship at great length; but Matthew, who wrote for the Jews, has recorded no such elaboration. It is probable that Christ stated plainly this familiar basic truth of His Universal Kingship, and then began at once to build on this foundation the great responsibility of His Kingdom. If Christ is King, then what follows? This first. The supreme problem of His Kingdom in this world is to help men to recognize rightly the sovereign authority of the Lord Jesus Christ.

note 20; and Chapter XXVIII, note 11. Notice also (*Matthew 28:17-18*) that this doubting took place before Jesus had yet come close to the group who were beholding Him.] This conference with the Apostles was official; but there is no definite suggestion that it was private. Others may have stood by, and looked on the scene. Those who doubted are supposed to have been such bystanders, who were beholding the Risen Lord for the first time in this appearance. Such doubt is hardly thinkable for the Apostles, who, by previous appointment, evidence, and conviction, had been fully prepared for this important meeting.

³Note in order the following Scriptures in support of the six principal propositions made in these two paragraphs concerning the Kingship of Christ.

(1) *Exodus* 3:14; *Psalms* 10:16; 22:28; 24:1-10; 47:7-9; 83:18; *Daniel* 2:44; 4:25, 32; *Isaiah* 6:1-13; 33:22; 43:15; *Jeremiah* 10:10; *Zechariah* 14:9.

That is the supreme responsibility of the Kingdom. Christ is King. He reigns with authority, as Law-Giver, Savior, Benefactor, and Final Judge. In some way, and at some time, all the world, every individual, must recognize Him as Lord and King. The Kingdom of Christ in this world, in all of its citizenship, its organization, its life, and its effort, must be devoted to this supreme problem. The Kingdom must help men everywhere and always to acknowledge the Son of God, Jesus Christ the King, aright—right for themselves, and right for Him. For the glory of being their King, redeemed unto Himself and to His Father, Christ died on the Cross; and those within His Kingdom must make his Death and His Sovereign Authority rightly effective in the thought, the hearts, and the lives of men. That is the great problem and work of the Kingdom of Christ.

How can it be done? Christ gave one answer. He said to evangelize the world. As a central means for the accomplishment of

**(1) Promoting
Christ's Kingdom,
by Evangelizing the
World: Preaching
the Gospel**

Matthew 28:19-20
Mark 16:15-16

this result, Christ prescribed the *Preaching of the Gospel*. The heralds of the Crucified Christ were to go into all the world. They were to preach the Gospel to the whole creation. They were to make disciples of all the nations. Through faith, as was assured to Abraham, all the nations should be blessed in Jesus Christ. With this principal means of promoting Christ's rightly acknowledged sovereignty in the hearts of men, the records of Matthew and Mark agree, as will be seen in the following statements.

Mark has quoted the Lord as saying: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned."

Matthew's quotation from the Lord's command is somewhat fuller: "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and

(2) *Genesis* 49:10; *Numbers* 24:17; *2. Samuel* 7:12-16; *Psalms* 2:6-12; 72:8; *Isaiah* 2:4; 32:1; 52:7; *Daniel* 7:13 (cf. *Matt.* 16:27); *John* 1:1-14, 49; 19:19 (and the discussion of this passage above); *Hebrews* 2:7-9; *Revelation* 11:15.

(3) *Genesis* 3:15; 12:2-3; 49:10; *2. Samuel* 7:12, 13, 16 (cf. *John* 12:34); *Psalms* 89:3-27; 132:11; *Isaiah* 11:10; 33:17; 55:3-4; *Jeremiah* 30:9; *Ezekiel* 34:23; *Hosea* 3:5.

(4) *Isaiah* 7:14; 9:6; *Luke* 1:26-38; 2:11; *Zechariah* 9:9 (cf. *Matt.* 21:5); *Jeremiah* 23:5-6 (cf. *1. Timothy* 6:15; and *Revelation* 19:16).

(5) *Matthew* 11:27; *Luke* 10:22; *John* 13:3; *Matthew* 25:31-46; 28:18; *John* 18:36-37.

(6) *Psalm* 110:1-7 (cf. *Heb.* 6:20—7:28); *Acts* 5:31; 17:31; *1. Corinthians* 15:24-28; *2. Corinthians* 5:10; *Ephesians* 1:19-23; *Philippians* 2:9-11; *2. Thessalonians* 1:7-12; *Hebrews* 1:1-14; *Jude* 24-25; *1. Peter* 3:22; *Revelation* 22:3-5.

of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you."

This statement of Matthew, as the reader will observe, was introduced by the word *therefore*. That word is of great importance. It shows that evangelizing the world follows from the fact of Christ's universal Kingship. If Christ is King, then His Gospel of Truth and Life must be preached. The Lord was telling the Apostles what to do. He was laying out their labours for them in the world. But deeper than that, for that moment at least, Christ was telling the Apostles the profound relation between their work and the eternal purposes and plans of God.

Preaching the Gospel a Part of God's Plan for Blessing All the World

The Apostles, and other ministers of the Kingdom, were to preach the Gospel. That was God's plan. From ancient times preaching the truth has been God's appointed means of promoting the right recognition of His Sovereign Son, both as the Messiah of Promise and the Christ of History.⁴ Home Missions, Foreign Missions, Christian Education, and all other "missions" of the universal Church of Christ, as its work is known today, were forethoughts of God inherent in His ancient Covenant with Abraham, promising Christ as a blessing to all the nations.⁵

Faith and baptism, intelligent and effective living according to the Law of Christ, and a consecrating love that worships God and communicates truth and blessedness to men—these are God's ways of rightly enthroning Jesus Christ. The work of the Apostles was appointed to be an outworking of these thoughts of God: a realization, through His Kingdom, of His own purpose of Sovereignty and of Grace. No greater mission was ever laid upon the hearts of men. The representatives of Christ's Kingdom are workers *for* and *with* the Lord of Heaven and Earth.

That was the great eternal purpose of the Kingdom of Christ: the conquest of the world by the power of Truth for the blessed Sovereignty of Jesus Christ. This truth, as the ultimate end of the Kingdom, Matthew and Mark agree in emphasizing. However, this ultimate purpose of the Kingdom may be attained in two ways. These two more immediate practical ends have been set forth separately by Matthew and Mark. Both of these writers have written the truth; since both have outlined effective means of

(2) Promoting Christ's Kingdom by Seeking Two Immediate Objectives

⁴Compare *Isaiah* 52:7, and *Romans* 10:13-15; *Acts* 5:29-32, and 10:38-43.
⁵*Genesis* 12:2-3. See also Chapter XX. Note 6 above.

enthroning Christ. Their differences at this point suggest that they were only reporting different parts of the Lord's discourse on this occasion.

According to Matthew's report, the Lord Jesus would have the Kingdom attain its ultimate work of universally enthroning

a. Matther's View: Christ through the immediate ends of an *objective organization*, and a thorough work of *moral and spiritual education*. He would

Organization and Education have His Kingdom disciple the nations, and

Matthew 28:19-20a educate them well in the Spirit and the Law of God, as taught by Christ Himself. Faith and Baptism, in Christ's thought as quoted by Matthew, stand for salvation built up into a consecrated objective organization which effectively functions in the moral and spiritual development of the people.

It was very natural that Matthew should have presented the right enthronement of Christ as visibly expressed in organization and education. Matthew wrote immediately for Jewish readers, who were used to this mode of thinking. For centuries the Jews had known God's Kingdom on earth as organized into the Nation of Israel. The devout men and women of that Nation had always known the inner spiritual nature of that Kingdom, and its teaching function, as emphasized by Matthew. "The Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," is a truth that should have been familiar to every Jew. These results of grace have always come from the knowledge and application of the Truth. Since the earliest days, God has insisted that the sovereignty of the Christ in the hearts of men shall be rightly exalted by teaching them His Laws, and by training them to observe and do His commandments.*

Such was the organization and the educational work of the Kingdom, spoken of by the Lord, as He has been reported by Matthew. Christ meant that His Kingdom should build itself up into a Christian community, clearly defined and separated from the world by faith and baptism, and thoroughly instructed and trained in the Laws of God. These results, which were a part of God's plan, if well worked out, would bring about a right recognition of Christ in the hearts of men, and would extend His Kingdom visibly throughout the world.

But God's Plan for the Sovereignty of His Son includes more than organization and education. The full enthronement of Christ means more. Into His hands, by Divine appointment from Eternity's Past, were given *all things*. The world is His: for

*See *Deuteronomy* 6:3-25; *Matthew* 11:28-30; *John* 17:3; *Romans* 14:17.

He made it. By Divine appointment all Men and Nature, the whole creation, are subject to His sovereign authority. His

b. Mark's View:
Subjection of All
Men and of Nature
to the Kingship
of Christ
Mark 16:15-16

saints will recognize Him gladly: for He is their Savior. Unbelievers and wicked men must recognize Him: for He is King and Judge over all. There is therefore this other view of Christ's Sovereignty, a gracious yet solemn view, which, as quoted by Mark, the Lord presented also on this occasion.

According to Mark's statement, the Lord Jesus directed that His Kingdom seek its ultimate purpose through the attainment of this other immediate end. The right recognition of His universal sovereignty should be brought about by addressing "the Gospel to the whole creation." This command, as understood in the general light of the Scriptures, means two things that are very definite.

All Men are subject to the Kingly authority of Christ, and all must acknowledge Him. Hence His command to preach the Gospel of Light and Life everywhere. That Gospel should be made effective with all those who are willing to believe and to be baptized: for they shall be saved. That Gospel should be presented faithfully to all those who will not believe; for they shall have to acknowledge Christ in Judgment. The Throne of Christ is the place of division. The Gospel must bring men to see the Truth aright, and to decide aright for Christ: for He is the King and Savior and Judge of all that live.

All Nature is subject to the Kingship of Christ. On the side of Natural Laws, His sovereignty has always been perfect and complete. His laws rule in things; and He makes them effective. Moreover, these laws, in their conception, and as administered by Christ, are in perfect accord with God's eternal purposes in the realms of the spirit. These laws are fixed: and there is no contradiction in the works of God, nor in the means whereby He expresses Himself.

However, from the standpoint of Man's moral nature, who uses the natural laws of God, the subjection of material things to Jesus Christ is far from what it ought to be. The reason lies in the perversions of men. When Man was perfect, his dominion over the world of things, and his use of them, were fully approved of God. There was perfect accord.⁷ The Lord's sovereignty over Nature to-day would be perfect, but for the fact

⁷See *Genesis* 1:26-31; *Romans* 8:28; *Matthew* 28:18; *I. Corinthians* 15:25; *Hebrews* 2:7-10.

that Nature's laws are manipulated by ungodly hands, and the products of Nature's laws are hoarded in unhallowed coffers.

Christ's sovereignty in material things, completed and perfected as it should be on its moral side, can be reached only through Man. God's purpose is to use the world of things to bless men and to glorify His own Son. The circuit of that purpose passes, from the Heart of Divine Love, through the Life-Work of His Son, through External Nature, and through Man, back to the Throne of Love. God is perfect. His Son is perfect. Nature is perfect. Man alone is imperfect. In Man alone is the moral circuit of Divine Sovereignty in things broken. In Man's consecration alone may the broken circuit be repaired.

Christ's sovereignty over material things can be what it ought to be only in so far as the world is Christianized. The mission of the Kingdom, therefore, as seen through this statement of Mark, is to awaken in Men a consecrating love toward God, and to elevate their lives into an enlightened harmony with God's eternal purposes. Then, and then only, can all things work together for their good: for then they will be living in harmony with God's eternal purposes, in which He has ordained a glorious subjection of *all things* unto the honor and praise of Jesus Christ, the King of Men and of Nature. For this full enthronement of Jesus Christ His Kingdom must labor with unceasing effort: for that work the Kingdom of Christ is inseparable from God's eternal purposes of salvation and blessedness to men, and of Divine Glory to His Own Son.

This work of bringing the world rightly to recognize the Kingship of Jesus Christ was, and is still, inseparably connected with the Throne of God in Heaven, where

**3. Christ's Own Part
in the Realization
of His Sovereignty**
Matthew 28:20b
Mark 16:17-18

Christ now sits at the right hand of His Father in Glory, and majesty, and power. From that Divine Throne, Christ was Himself appointed to have an effective part in this greatest of all undertakings,—the execution of the great divine purpose for which God has allowed the world to stand; and that is the right enthronement of Christ in the hearts of men and women. Christ has always had a great part in the realization of His own Sovereignty in the world.

That part to be taken by Christ, as stated in Matthew's record, was given to the Apostles as an assurance of fellowship in success: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." When translated into daily needs for the work of the Kingdom, as was done in the more practical statement of Mark,

this assurance meant several things: "signs" to support faith; "new tongues" for communicating the truth; protection against injury and poison; and the healing ministry of the royal power of Christ. As a Divine Helper in such respects as these, Christ assured His presence always with those who were to represent the efforts of His Kingdom to realize His Own Sovereignty.

In this analysis Christ has set forth the work of His Kingdom as related to the eternal purposes of God. He has viewed that work in its connections with the Throne of the Father. It only remains now for Christ to analyze this same Great Commission again as a working program of the Church. When He has done that, the King of Glory will be ready to ascend to His Throne of Glory.

2. *The Probable Conference on the Work of the Kingdom with James in Jerusalem.* This Tenth Appearance of the Risen

Tenth Appearance:
to James in Jerusalem

1. Corinthians 15:7

Lord probably came at this time; but the matter is not at all certain. No one knows definitely when, or why, the Lord Jesus appeared to James. Paul has entered a notice of the fact; and the Appearance is tentatively placed here as the Tenth in the order of the Lord's manifestations of Himself.

This James was an Apostle, the brother of Simon and Jude. He is thought to have been a member of the household of Jesus Himself.⁸ Later in the early history of the Church, James was the recognized Apostolical Head of the Church at Jerusalem; and at this time He may have been a leader in that congregation.

This Appearance was probably official, but it may have been mainly personal. There is an old legend to the effect that this James had vowed neither to eat nor drink until he had seen the Risen Lord; and that the Lord appeared, with this message: "My Brother, eat thy bread, for the Son of Man is risen from the dead." If this legend be true, then the Appearance belongs to an earlier date than is here supposed. One strong argument for placing this Appearance at this later date is the thought that it may have had some preparatory connections with the great final appearance in Jerusalem, to which attention will now be turned.

⁸Paul's notice of this appearance places it, with others, in this order: To Cephas; then to the Twelve; after that to the five hundred; after that to James; then to the Twelve; and last of all to Paul himself. (1. Corinthians 15:5-8). This order suggests that followed above. For a study of James, see Chapter VI, at Note 15. See also Acts 12:2; 15:13; 21:18; and Galatians 2:9.

VI. The Work of Christ's Kingdom as the Program of the Church in Saving the World

The Lord Jesus first considered the work of His Kingdom in its relations to His Father's eternal purposes. After that, in the last appearance of the Risen Lord, He turned His thought, and that of the Apostles, to the needs of an unsaved world. In both parts of this final appearance, as will appear in the following discussion, Christ the Savior held one central thought before the minds of the Apostles. This He also laid upon their hearts. He emphasized that the work of His Kingdom was to bring life and blessedness into the world through an acceptance of Christ, the Savior and King. This Great Commission Christ gave to the Apostles, outlining therein a world-wide working program for the Church of Christ in the evangelization of the world.

The Work of the Kingdom Appointed to the Church. The Eleventh Appearance of the Risen Lord was composed of two scenes. The first was in Jerusalem: the second, on the Mount of Olives, at the place of the Ascension. During the First Part of this Appearance, in Jerusalem, the Lord Jesus discussed the work of His Kingdom that was to be done by the working forces of the Church of Christ in the world.

Eleventh Appearance—Part I: to the Eleven in Jerusalem, before the Ascension
 Luke 24:44-49
 Acts 1:1-5

This meeting with the Apostles was official, and has been so reported. Few circumstantial details have been mentioned. The Apostles had assembled at some gathering place within the City, possibly in the Upper Room. There the Risen Lord met with them for this conference; and from this place He later led them forth to the place of His Ascension. At this time, He spoke to them about the work of the Church, and about the special equipment for that work.

That work was, and is, to evangelize the world. The thought of Christ at this time centered in the Gospel which must be preached. That Gospel was the *Good News* for a lost world. That Gospel was the message of saving love to dying men. That Gospel convicted of sin, and also revealed a Savior Who is Lord and King of Life. That Gospel of truth, and love, and life, the Kingdom and Church of Christ must hold forth and commend to all the world, so that men may know the

1. Work of the Church, to Evangelize the World

Lord Jesus unto the saving of their souls. By way of defining and emphasizing this work of the Church, Christ spoke, probably with considerable elaboration, on the following points.

The Gospel of Christ, which the Church must advance in the world, is the outworking of the Plan of God. That first; for

**(1) Gospel of
Christ an Out-
working of God's
Plan**

Luke 24: 44

Christ never allowed the messengers of the Cross to forget that they were workers together with God. Summarizing His own Life-work as a revelation of God's Plan, Christ said: "These are My words which

I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, how that all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the Law of Moses, and the Prophets, and the Psalms, concerning Me."

In this divine summary, Christ laid emphasis upon several things. First, He defined the Gospel of Life and Hope as issuing directly from the Heavenly Father's heart of love for a lost world. That saving love was accomplished, and made effective, in, and by, and through the Son of God, even as He had earlier announced in the best known verse of the Scriptures.⁹ Again, this Plan of God's saving love must be made effective throughout the world. "All things must needs be fulfilled." The Promise of blessedness in Christ was for all nations. The Gospel of Christ must be preached in all the world for a testimony to all the peoples. Furthermore, Christ here gave an important place to the Scriptures of the Old Testament as well as New in the unfolding of God's plan of salvation for all the world. Finally, He limited the Gospel message to one thing: it is the Gospel of Christ, as announced in the ancient Scriptures, as accomplished in Himself, and as planned by His Father from eternity unto eternity.

The Gospel of Christ presents the *one way* of life to a lost world. The Church of Christ has always been an organization.

**(2) Gospel of Christ
the Only Way of
Forgiveness and Life**

Luke 24:45-47

It is an exclusive organization. It is the most rigidly exclusive organization in the world. Its conditions of membership are not only external and formal, but they are also spiritual, dwelling deep in the heart,

where they are tested fully by the searching eye of God. The true conditions are sincere faith and repentance, which lead to an atonement for sin and the gift of life by Jesus Christ. The resulting membership of the Kingdom, since the days of Christ

⁹John 3:16.

Himself, has been organized, by the divinely appointed defining ordinances of the Church, formally and exclusively, into the Church of Christ. Since ancient times, *Beth-el*, the *House of God*, has been the Gate of Heaven.¹⁰

Such was the thought of Christ, when He at this time opened the minds of the Apostles, "that they might understand the Scriptures." He expounded the thought and plan of God respecting His own suffering, and death, and resurrection, as a necessary basis for repentance and remission of sins, which should be preached in His Name unto all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.¹¹ This is another of the lost lessons of the Master. But in it He certainly showed how, and why, salvation was possible only through the humiliation, death, and exaltation of the Son of God. In this Plan of Redemption alone is there a hope for the souls of men; for repentance and forgiveness of sins are offered to the world only in the Name of Jesus Christ.¹² This exposition of life only through the atoning death of Christ Himself was the Lord's second thought about that Gospel which His Church should represent before all the world.

Christ's final thought at this time was concerned with the questions of responsibility and equipment. This Gospel of Life, as expounded on this occasion by the Lord Himself, must be preached to all nations and peoples. This must be done by the Church of Christ, which was then represented by the Apostles. To them therefore the Lord said, "Ye are witnesses of these things."¹³ Herein the Lord defined the plan and the authority for the extension of His Kingdom and His organized Church, through the preaching of the Gospel unto the ends of the earth. That work, beginning from Jerusalem, in the witness of the Apostles, must go forward until the whole world has heard the glad tidings.

That was the Great Commission of the Church. For that great responsibility Christ was ready to promise an equally great equipment in the gift of the Holy Spirit. "And behold," said the Lord, "I sent forth the promise of My Father upon you: but

¹⁰See *Genesis* 28:17-19.

¹¹On the going forth of the Gospel from Jerusalem, see *Psalms* 110:1-3; *Isaiah* 4:2-6; *Micah* 4:2; *Zechariah* 14:8-9; and *Acts* 1:8.

¹²Compare *Matthew* 1:21; *John* 3:16, 18, 36; *Acts* 4:12; 10:43; 1. *Timothy* 2:3-7; *John* 14:6; and *Revelation* 3:20.

¹³Note the echo of this entire discourse in *Acts* 5:29-32, and 10:38-43. Note also that the Apostles testified and explained, but did not philosophize about the Gospel truth: *John* 1:14; *Acts* 4:20; 17:2-3, 11; 1. *John* 1:1-4; 1. *Corinthians* 2:1-5; 1. *Timothy* 4:6-16.

tarry ye in the City, until ye be clothed with power from on high." Luke, in his later statement of this incident in the *Book of Acts*,

(1) Promise of the Holy Spirit said that Jesus "commanded that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father (for) . . . ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." This promise of the Holy Spirit was an ancient promise. It was renewed in a special way by the Savior, and finally fulfilled by Him, in answer to prayer, on the great Day of Pentecost.¹⁴

The program of the Kingdom thus laid upon the Church was very definite. The Apostles, and after them the general ministry

(2) Prospect of the Kingdom and Its Work of the Church, were workers together with the Lord. They were helpers in the carrying out of His eternal purposes. They were appointed to the work of extending Christ's

Kingdom in the world. This they were to do by preaching the Gospel of the Crucified and Risen Savior. They were to begin at Jerusalem, and to wait there for the gift and power of the Holy Spirit. They were to preach a gospel of faith and repentance, of atonement and life, through the mercy of God in Jesus Christ. And they were to carry this message of faith, forgiveness, and life, to the ends of the earth, making possible in all nations the acknowledgement of Christ and the blessedness of His Kingdom in the hearts of men. That is the mission and work of the Church in the world.

VI. The Ascension of Christ: Returning to His Throne

When Christ had completed His discourse in Jerusalem, having laid the responsibilities of His Kingdom upon the hearts of the

Eleventh Appearance—Part II: the Ascension of Christ from the Mt. of Olives Apostles, He led them forth from the City to the Mount of Olives, where He stopped for another discourse before His Ascension up to His Throne in Heaven.

The incidents of this scene constitute the Second Part of the Eleventh Appearance. The movement from the City out to the place of the Ascension was continuous, the Lord being with the Apostles in the way.

There is a slight suggestion of conversation; but there may have been a ceremonious solemnity about this short

¹⁴Compare *Isaiah* 44:3; *Jeremiah* 31:33; *Joel* 2:28-32; *John* 14—16; 20:22; and *Acts* 2. See also *Matthew* 3:11-12; *Luke* 3:16-17; *John* 1:33; *Acts* 10:44; 11:15-16.

procession. At length the Lord, Who led the way, paused at a selected point on the brow of the Mount of Olives, over against the village of Bethany. Possibly the Lord took care to arrange the Apostles and others who were present, if any, in some special order.

The Work of the Kingdom Directed by the Sovereign Head of the Church. Whatever the preliminaries, Christ continued at this time to speak of the work of His Kingdom. But there is here an obvious elevation in the point of view. There is here the voice of administrative authority. Christ speaks at this time more as the Divine Head of the Church, Who from His Throne in Heaven directs the affairs of His Kingdom on earth.

1. *The Kingdom on Earth Defined, and Its Work Restated.* Christ's own words on this occasion, prior to His Ascension, were in the nature of two final definitions. He spoke of His own Kingship as related to His Kingdom on earth; and He restated the working program of the Church.

For both of these points on which the Lord touched at this time there was an immediate occasion in the minds of the Apostles. Doubtless there was a certain exalted solemnity about these last official meetings with the Risen Lord. The Apostles would naturally have been deeply impressed with a feeling that something unusual was about to happen. The Lord had persistently spoken of His Kingdom and its work in the world. These discourses, almost certainly, had caused the Apostles to associate their feeling of an impending event with the expectation of something spectacular in connection with the Kingdom of Christ. Possibly they had, in a quiet way among themselves, discussed their feelings, on their way out from the City to this place of the Ascension.

Christ began His discourse, therefore, with a correction of a wrong surmise that had crept into the minds of the Apostles.

1. Christ's
Correction
Regarding His
Kingdom
Acts 1:6-7

They invited this correction, after they were arranged at the place of the Ascension, by asking the Savior this question: "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the Kingdom of Israel?" Thus it is seen that their old hope of a visible kingdom had re-

vived, but with this qualifying attitude of uncertainty and cautious inquiry.¹⁵

The Lord's reply was kind, but definite. He said neither

¹⁵On their old hope, here revived, see *Luke* 19:11; *Matthew* 20:20-28; *Mark* 10:35-45; *Luke* 24:21.

Yes, nor No; for the truth in either case would have been liable to misconstruction. They were looking for something spectacular on this occasion. The Lord therefore replied to *the point of time* in their question. "At this time," in the sense of their expectation and inquiry, the Lord had no such matter in hand.

Christ desired, however, at this time, in a permanent and constructive way, to turn the minds of the Apostles away from this hidden truth of the *time element* in the work of His Kingdom,¹⁶ to the working program which He was about to restate. He therefore said definitely, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His Own Power."

But they did have a present duty which should absorb all of their attention and energy. "But," continued Christ by way of impressing this present obligation—"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

**2. Christ's
Restatement of the
Program of the
Church
Acts 1:8**

In those words the Lord Jesus defined again the present duty of the Apostles, and the permanent working program of the Church of Christ in the world. He set that for the supreme responsibility of His own Kingdom. He outlined a world-wide activity for the Church. He designated the appointed human means by which His Kingdom should be propagated in the hearts of men. He renewed His promise of an adequate power for carrying forward the right recognition of His Name, and His Sovereign Authority, and His saving grace, into all the world. Thus the Lord Jesus, in His last recorded words, gave again that Great Commission to the Church, by which His Kingdom would bring to pass the eternal purposes of God through the help of the Divine Spirit.¹⁷

2. The Place and Work of Christ in the Program of His Kingdom. After Christ had corrected the Apostles, and had restated their work, and that of the Church in general, the interest of the Gospel narrative centers finally in the Lord Jesus Himself, and in the distinctly Heavenly aspects of His Kingdom. The story of the Ascension sets forth the re-enthronement of the Son of God in Heaven,

**Sufferings of Christ
and the Glory That
Should Follow**

1. Peter 1:11

¹⁶See Matthew 24:36-42; Mark 13:32-37; 1. Thessalonians 5:1-2; 2. Peter 3:9-15.
¹⁷On the power and activity of the Holy Spirit in the Early Church, see Acts 2; 4:8; 6:3-8; 9:31; 10:38-48; 13:2; 15:28; Romans 15:13-16. 1. Corinthians 2:4-5; Ephesians 3:16-17; and Philippians 2:12-13.

and suggests, in sweeping outlines, the extent of His work there until the purposes of God shall have been fully accomplished.

This Exaltation of the Lord Jesus, as recorded in the Scriptures, included three separate things. It began with a *Benedic-*

**1. Christ's Ascension
to His Throne in
Heaven**

Mark 16:19

Luke 24:50b-51

Acts 1:9

tion. "And He lifted up his hands and blessed them." Then came the Ascension proper, which took place while Jesus was yet blessing the Apostles. Luke has stated, in *The Acts*, that this Ascension was gradual, and carefully observed by the Apostles: for

"while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight." The Exaltation was completed, according to Mark's statement, in the re-enthronement of the Lord Jesus, "Who was received up into Heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God."¹⁸

From that Throne with His Father, Christ shall exercise His Sovereign Authority until His Coming again in person for the consummation of His Kingdom. That was

**2. Christ's Sovereign
Work Suggested by
the Heavenly
Messengers**

Acts 1:11-12

the meaning of the Heavenly Messengers, who stood by in white apparel. While the Apostles were watching closely the Son of God, as He gradually ascended out of their sight, these "Two Men," as they were called,

stood by and said, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into Heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into Heaven." Between the limits here suggested lies the sovereign program of the Lord Jesus Christ on His Throne in Heaven, as is partially surveyed in the last chapter of this book."

3. *The First Response of the Church to the Royal Command of Christ.* The assurance last quoted was sufficient for the im-

**Waiting for the
Spirit and Power**

Luke 24:52-53

Mark 16:20

Acts 1:12-14

mediate re-action of the Apostles. It is true that Mark, in his last dynamic verses, projected his Gospel record into the future activities of the Early Church, going to a point beyond the time when the Church received the gift and power of the Holy Spirit.

But the immediate response of the Apostles has been recorded

¹⁸See Psalm 68:18 (Ephesians 4:7-10); John 3:13; 6:62; 20:17; Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25; 1. John 2:1; Philippians 2:9; Colossians 3:1; 1. Timothy 3:16; 1. Peter 3:22; John 17:5.

¹⁹These same limits of the Lord's work are set in the words for instituting the Lord's Supper, 1. Corinthians 11:26. See also John 14:1-3. On the Lord's Coming Again, see Zechariah 14:5; Matthew 16:27-28; 25:31; Mark 8:38; 1. Thessalonians 4:16; 2. Thessalonians 1:7-10; Revelation 1:7; 22:7.

by Luke, whose statements in the *Gospel* and in *The Acts* are in perfect accord. Altogether, in closing his account of the Gospel, Luke has mentioned the following points of interest.

First, the Apostles, there on the Mount, worshipped the Ascended Lord. Then they returned to the City with great joy. Next, they assembled in the Upper Room for prayer. They were all present, according to the roll-call recorded; and they seem to have taken up permanent lodging in that place. The women from Galilee also were present, and the Lord's brethren, and Mary, His Mother, who is mentioned here for the first time since John took her away from the Cross of her dying Son. With these, the Apostles "continued with one accord in prayer and supplication," dividing their devotions, as it seems, between the Temple and this Upper Room.

So ends the Life-Story of the Lord Jesus Christ. The curtain falls upon this devout group of appointed witnesses and faithful friends of the Exalted Lord and Savior, who are here waiting for the promised power of the Holy Spirit to carry forward the work of Christ's Kingdom to the uttermost ends of the earth. Here the book might close, except for the possibility of misunderstanding. The Life-Work of the Son of God began in the eternity of the past. It will continue into the eternity of the future. Hence there was need for the prologue materials in the first chapter of this book. Hence there is also a need now for an additional chapter, which will be in the nature of an epilogue of very great importance.

CHAPTER XXX

THE SOVEREIGN CHRIST TO-DAY

"Jesus Christ . . . is gone into Heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him." *1. Peter 3:21-22. cf. Acts 7:55.*

"Our Lord Jesus Christ, . . . Who is the blessed and only Potentate, the KING of kings, and the LORD of lords." *1. Timothy 6:14-15. Revelation 19:16.*

"I am persuaded that . . . (nothing) . . . shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." *Romans 8:38-39.*

"Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." *Revelation 22:7, 20.*

Jesus Christ is in Heaven to-day. He is there seated on the Throne of God, at the right hand of God the Father. Christ is King over all things. His authority must be recognized. It is an announced purpose of God, "that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, . . . and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." In these words God has defined for every life its supreme responsibility. Concerning this responsibility every man is daily deciding what he will do. The work of the Church, as has been emphasized already, is to help men to acknowledge Christ aright. For that purpose, the world stands, and the power of God's love and mercy and grace is operative in the world to-day.

The re-enthroned Christ has appeared to men since His Ascension. The purpose of this final chapter is to survey briefly the present Divine administration of Jesus Christ, the Royal Son of God. That administration will be viewed in its three principal aspects: as Mediatorial at the Throne of God; as Personal within the Early Christian Church; and as Triumphant in the culmination of the world. This survey of the Lord's Kingship will bring into view all of His later appearances, and will also show them in their several relations to the work of His Kingdom in the present world.

I. Christ's Mediatorial Administration at the Throne of God

Jesus Christ is the Divine-Human Mediator between God and Man. His Mediatorial Administration is conducted from His place at His Father's Throne in Heaven. There He *mediates*, or *goes between*, representing the interests of God and of Men.

On the one hand, Christ stands for, speaks for, and acts for all the interests of His Father that relate to the world. On the other hand, He represents to His Father the interests of all the world. Through Christ alone, as the divinely appointed Mediator, is there any intercourse either to or from the Throne of God. God the Father is approachable only through the Mediation of His Son Jesus Christ. In this position as the only Mediator of all things, Christ exercises the three functions of Prophet, Priest, and King.

I. Christ the Prophet. Jesus of Nazareth was in very truth a Teacher sent from God.¹ Of Him it was rightly said, that

**Christ the
Wonderful
Counsellor**
Isaiah 9:6

"never man spake like this Man!" He taught in His own authority, as Himself being the Source and the Finality of Truth. His authority was the authority of God. With a "Verily, verily, I say unto you,"

Christ declared the Law, and the Prophets, and the Gospel of Heaven and Hope. He commanded the ultimate confidence of immortal souls. This office of Prophet Christ exercises in His Kingdom, and over the world to-day.

Christ is the world's Teacher to-day. He teaches, as He promised to teach, through spiritual enlightenment, through direct inspiration, and through His Spirit's guiding the deeper reflections and memories of men. Christ makes the meaning of His own Life-Work as Savior clear and effective

**1. Christ's Personal
Work as Prophet**
Cf. John 16:1-30

to-day in touching the responsive hearts of men, even as He did on the Day of Pentecost. He has fully inspired an account of His Life-Work that speaks with divine authority, and with divine assurance. He teaches men to-day, by His Word and by His Spirit, how to attain salvation, leading them by the necessary way of conviction, repentance, faith, and love, to lives of service, and to the hope of Heaven. He instructs men in the high art of Christian living, showing them how to nurture a saved life. He sends His own Spirit to build men up into Christ-likeness, leavening and sanctifying them in thought and heart, in life and influence. He counsels also in the principles of service, sending His Divine Spirit to help direct the work of His Kingdom. Such, in part, is the direct personal teaching of Jesus, the great Prophet of the world to-day.

¹The larger work of the prophet was to teach. He was sent from God to men, teaching the truth, and sometimes revealing future events. On Christ as Prophet, see *Matthew* 21:11; *Luke* 1:76; 7:16; *John* 6:14; 3:2; 4:19; 7:40; *Luke* 24:19; *Deuteronomy* 18:15; *Isaiah* 9:6; *Acts* 3:22-23.

Christ has also spoken through men inspired, and still speaks through men under spiritual appointment. From ancient times

**2. Christ's Provisions
for His Ambassadors**
Cf. 2 Cor. 5:9-21

Christ has proclaimed the truth of life, and the laws of righteousness. He has provided a fourfold record of His own Life-Work, and of His Nature as the Son of God and Savior of the world. Then to this record of facts, He has added the multiplied books of the *New Testament* in explanation of Himself and of His work as Savior. In all of these manifold writings, Christ has spoken, unfolding the meaning of the Gospel, and translating its truth into terms of personal life and of social obligations. The Lord has thus provided a message for His Ambassadors to carry to the ends of the earth.

And these inspired records, both of facts and of explanations and applications, are high above the thoughts of men. The things which Christ has taught are set down with a frankness, a fidelity, a courage, a loftiness of thought, a depth, a comprehension of life and its problems, and a heaven-born earnestness of purpose to save the lost, that have made these inspired books both the wonder and the miracle of history. Even the Great Apostle Paul, looking out on the unfathomed sea of Divine Truth as partially exhibited in the Gospels, could only exclaim:

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been His counsellor? Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to Whom be glory for ever! Amen."²

These exalted teachings of Christ naturally provoke some suggestions about *Preaching*. If any man's work is definite, the

**3. Suggestions on
Preaching**

1 Cor. 2:1-16

1 Tim. 4:6-16

2 Tim. 2:8-16

3:16-17; 4:2

preacher's is more so. He is to hold forth the testimony of the Truth, and then to organize, conserve, and utilize the results, depending always upon God to give the increase. But what shall the minister of Christ preach? That is the suggestion here singled out for special emphasis. What message shall the minister bring to the waiting people?

²Romans 11:33-36. See also the exalted character, and the absolute certainty of Divine Truth in its effectiveness, as described in *Isaiah* 55:8-13.

In general, let the minister always preach the Gospel of Christ. That is what the people want to hear. That is what they most need. That alone will satisfy their spiritual needs. That is what they come to church for. Let a man master the Bible, giving his days and nights to prayerful study, so that he may feed the flock of God, and satisfy the world's hunger for the truth of God and for the Savior Whom God has offered to dying men.

Let the minister of the Gospel tell the simple story of Jesus Christ. There is no better preaching, when the story is well told. That is what the Gospel Writers have done: and they are the world's greatest preachers. Tell the Old, Old Story, simply, grandly, worthily. This the world wants to hear again: for it awakens love, and faith, and hope.

Let the minister explain what the Gospel means. Let him do so in terms of the expositions in the Bible. Let him speak in terms of the Law and the Prophets, the Psalms and the Histories, the Epistles and the Apocalypse, giving the people God's own commentary on the Gospel of His Son. Let the minister think the thoughts of God after Him, and then think those thoughts with the people. Let him, for example, sit at the feet of Paul, and learn the profound meaning of Christ's life, and death, and resurrection, and kingship, and judgment of men. Such thought, even fairly well delivered, will challenge attention: it will even attract an audience. Such depths and riches of thought command confidence, and call forth the best faith and love possible to the human spirit. The weakness of the Pulpit to-day is due, more than to all other causes combined, to the substitution of something else for the Word of God in the preaching from week to week. The natural result is the common lamentable spiritual poverty in the Pew.

Let the minister also preach Bible standards of moral life. In many parts of God's Word the meaning of Christ has been translated into terms of life and conduct. Let these things be urged upon the conscience of the people. There is no need to fear the power of these standards to command respect from all sane men, and to nurture the spiritual life in men. Let the messenger of the Cross preach more than the mere negative Gospel of inhibition. This is good, and necessary. But let him herald the great constructive Gospel of service. That is the secret power in

**(1) Preach the Facts
and Truths of the
Gospel of Christ**

**(2) Preach Bible
Standards of Moral
Life**

Philippians 4:8
Galatians 5:22-26

Christ, and in His Disciples who turned the world upside down. Life is *life*. It must have expression. It must be propagated. These are the laws of spiritual life in the Kingdom of Christ. Faith and Love, Life and Service, are the first laws of Christian living. These must be directed aright, according to the standards of God's eternal Word.

Let the preacher, above all things else, "Preach the WORD." That is his business. Let him study that Word until he knows

it. Let him know the facts of the passage, the meaning of the passage in a general way,

(3) Preach the Word of God

2 Tim. 4:2

and what that passage ought to mean to his audience at that time. That is the working outline of all good preaching. It is doubtful, indeed, if a preacher of the Gospel, in his sermon building, should ever go outside of the Word of God, except to define the present human conditions to which he would fit the truth of life from that Word. The power and fruitage of the Gospel arise from the proclamation of the Gospel itself.

That truth should be emphasized. The Lord wants the Gospel preached, and not something else. His will in the matter may be learned from the original commissions to preach the Gospel. The gifts of the Spirit, and the attestation of signs and wonders, were promised only in connection with the bearing of testimony to the truth of Christ. That was true when Christ sent out the Twelve Apostles, and the Seventy Disciples, and of every other commission which He gave for the Gospel ministry.³ Let a man declare "the things of Christ," with authority, with power, with faithfulness, and without fear. That is the preaching which commands respect. That is the preaching which wears well. Such preaching is appointed to be the power of God unto salvation. Such preaching men need every day. For such preaching men come to church. Too often, alas, they go away in disappointment, if not in disgust. The dying world needs the Gospel, wants the Gospel, and must have the Gospel.⁴

Christ Jesus, the
Apostle and High
Priest of Our
Profession
Hebrews 3:1—10:39

2. *Christ the Priest.* To-day Jesus Christ is also a Priest. At the Throne of God in Heaven, the Divine-Human Savior, in perfect accord with the eternal purposes of God, and in complete sympathy with Man and his deepest needs, ministers as "the Apostle and High Priest of our profession." In that exalted capacity,

³Matthew 9:36—10:42; Luke 10:1-42; Mark 16:19-20; Acts 2:1-47; 6:5-8; 8:5, 17, and other like passages.

⁴Possibly the summary of all good preaching has been given by Peter, in 2. Peter 1:2-4.

Christ is the One in Whom and through Whom all the mercies and blessings of God are secured and made effective to the sons of men.

As Priest, the Son of God is the "one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus; Who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." Such was the expression of this truth by the Apostle Paul. Christ Himself said, "I am the Door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." Again

1. Christ the One Mediator between God and Men
1 Timothy 2:5-6

Paul, including all the world under the Jews and the Gentiles, has spoken of Christ's mediation in these words: "For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." And Christ proclaimed Himself in these words: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me." There is no way of approach or access to God, and no way of acceptance with Him, except through Jesus Christ. He is the one Mediator between God and men.⁵

This Priesthood of Christ was not an after-thought of the *New Testament*, worked out by the later writers in their reflections on the atoning Death of Christ. His Priestly work was appointed to Him as Savior in the ancient counsels of God to save a lost world. It was appointed that the Son of God, on the altar of saving love, in self-devoted obedience to God's will, should lay

(1) Christ's Priestly Office in the Plan of God's Love to Save the Lost
John 3:14-17; 12:32

down His life a ransom for many. At that great sacrifice, Christ Himself acted as Priest, offering Himself as the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world.⁶ On the infinite merits of the sacrifice of Himself thus made, Christ was appointed to enter into, and to remain for ever in, the presence of God. Christ is seated on the Throne of Heaven, at His Father's right hand, in order that he may make intercession for His people, pleading for them the mercy and the grace of God.

From the earliest Scriptures the truth grows in clearness, that Jesus Christ was to be both a Sacrifice and a Priest at the altar, both a Lamb of God to take away sin and a High Priest to offer that Lamb. Of this double truth, the entire sacrificial system of ancient Israel was a type and a symbol. This truth was consecrated to Israel in rivers of sacrificial blood: for every high

⁵For the quotations in this paragraph, in addition to the marginal reference, see *John* 10:9; *Ephesians* 2:18; and *John* 14:6.

⁶See the previous discussion of Christ's High Priestly Prayer (*John*, Chapter 17); and note also the divine control, as previously suggested, which Christ exercised over the facts of His own Death.

priest at the altar in Israel was a type of Christ giving His life a ransom on the Cross.⁷ Moreover, the Priesthood of Christ was a

(2) Christ's
Priesthood in Type
and Prophecy
Isaiah 53:1-12
Zechariah 6:13
2 Cor. 5:21

clear announcement of Prophecy, which scheduled His sacrifice, His exaltation, and His intercession. Christ was definitely proclaimed by David as "a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek." To this office the Lord Jesus was appointed in the original purposes of Divine Love to save a lost world.⁸

Christ knew that He was appointed to such a Priesthood. The fact of this appointment was ever a moving cause in His Life-Work on earth. Many times He deliberately exercised the functions of this office. He offered Himself on the Cross as a ransom for sinners. He forgave sins, as a right and power appointed to Him on His merits as the

(3) Christ's
Priesthood in His
Deeds and His
Exaltation

Son of Man. He urged men to pray in His Name, and through Him as Mediator. He made intercession on many occasions; and He announced this work of intercession as one of His special priestly functions when He had ascended again to the Throne of His Father in Heaven.

To-day, in fulfillment of prophecy, and of His own word, as the Writer of *Hebrews* has said, "We have such a High Priest, Who is set on the right hand of the Throne of the Majesty in the Heavens, a Minister of the Sanctuary, and of the True Tabernacle." "Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." So said Peter soon after the Day of Pentecost. And the Writer of *Hebrews* has drawn this conclusion: "Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them."⁹

This conclusion agrees with Paul's statement, previously quoted, that "there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, Who gave Himself a ransom for

⁷On the Priest as a type of Christ, see *Hebrews* 3:1 ff.; and compare also *Romans* 15:8; *Hebrews* 2:17; 4:14-16; 8:1-2; 9:6-15, 24-28; 10:1-22.

⁸*Psalm* 110:4. Melchizedek was a contemporary with Abraham, and was, therefore, antecedent to Levi and the Levitical line of priests. The genealogy of Melchizedek was not given. He appeared as priest by the special appointment of God, and was so recognized by Abraham. Melchizedek was also a royal priest, being "King of Salem," as well as "the priest of the Most High God." (*Genesis* 14:17-24). In all of these respects Melchizedek was a type of the Priesthood of Christ. His royalty followed the Tribe of Judah, and the House of David, the typical king. The Priesthood of Christ was, therefore extra-Levitical. He was a Priest by the special appointment of God. See *Hebrews*, Chapters 5 to 10, inclusive.

⁹*Zechariah* 6:13; *Acts* 5:31; *Hebrews* 8:1-2; 7:25.

all." Everywhere in God's plan of love and life, the truth is the same. There is one Door of the Sheep, one Son of God and Savior of men, one Mediator through Whom men may hope for access to the face and favor of God.

This truth is rightly exclusive. Salvation with confidence would otherwise be impossible. Whether one look upon the ancient appointment of Christ, or upon the gradual unfolding of His priestly functions in types and prophecies, or upon the exercise of those functions in His Life-Work on earth, or upon the office appointed to Him at His Father's Throne, the truth of His exclusive Priesthood does not vary at all. There is one High Priest of Heaven, one Mediator and Advocate with the Father, one Redeemer and Savior of men, one Name alone whereby men must be saved, One Only Son of God Who has authority and power to go into the presence of God and there secure mercy and grace for those who have sinned against the God of Heaven.

Christ has been exalted to the right hand of God, "to make intercession for us." What does Christ do in the exercise of His priestly office at the Throne of God? Mainly

2. Christ's Work as Priest at the Throne of God

two things. Christ has already offered Himself as a Lamb of God, an atoning sacrifice.

Two parts of His work remain, like that of the high priest in Israel: to represent the sacrifice before God, and on the basis of that sacrifice to make the prayer of intercession to God. Both of these Christ is doing in Heaven to-day.

To-day Christ is representing His sacrificial obedience and death before the Throne of God. This atoning merit of Christ is

(1) Christ's Representation of His Sacrificial Obedience and Death

the basis of all forgiveness, all mercy, and all hope of salvation; for the wages of sin is death; and without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin. But the Death of Christ was an atonement for sin, the only atonement there is for sin. He died that those

who believe in Him might not die. So was Jesus Christ appointed unto death, that He through death might become the Savior of the world.

So was His Saviorship through death typified in ages of sacrifices. "Ye know," said Peter, "that ye were . . . redeemed . . . with the precious Blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot." This idea of an atoning Death of Christ, by which men are redeemed unto God, Paul has stated in these words: "For (God) hath made Him, Who knew

no sin, to be a Sin-Offering for us; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." "God so loved the world," said Christ Himself, "that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." This Gift of Divine Love covers and insures all other "good things" to them that believe in Christ: for He presents the infinite merit of His own Life and Death; and Him the Father heareth always.¹⁰

To-day Christ is also making intercession for His people before the Father's Throne in Heaven. This the Lord Jesus does on the ground and merit of His own Life and Death as Savior. He has merits which He may urge as moving arguments for life and blessings. Like the High Priest of ancient Israel, Christ speaks to God for the people. He prays for them directly, on His own account, because He sees repentance, and faith, and love in their hearts. He receives their prayers, which must be made in His Name, and represents them before the Throne of God. Since Christ is the one Mediator, all communications from men to God must recognize the Lord Jesus Christ, and be represented by Him before the Father in Heaven.¹¹

This emphasis upon the exclusive Priesthood of Jesus Christ as the one Mediator between God and men leads to serious reflections concerning the ideals of Christian life, and the necessity of Christ for both the saint and the sinner. Let it be remembered always that Jesus Christ came to seek and to save the lost. He died that men might have life. He wants to save the lost, and will save all those who will allow themselves, by repentance and faith, to be saved. Let it be remembered also that Christ is a sympathetic High Priest. He knows the world's weaknesses, and bears the world's burdens upon His own heart. His only tears were tears of sympathetic comfort, and tears of sorrow for the lost, for those who had refused to be saved.¹²

The Christian daily needs the services of Jesus Christ as High Priest at the Throne of God. "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the Heavens, Jesus, the Son

¹⁰See *Hebrews* 9:22; *Romans* 6:23; *Mark* 10:45; *Romans* 5:9; *Hebrews* 3:1—10:31; *Isaiah* 53:1-12; *1. Peter* 2:24-25; 1:18-19; *Acts* 20:28; *John* 1:29; *2. Corinthians* 5:21; *John* 3:16; *Romans* 8:32; *John* 11:42, and many other similar passages.

¹¹Christ intercedes for life (*Hebrews* 7:25); for forgiveness (*Acts* 5:31); for gifts of the Spirit (*John* 14:16; 15:26); for protection from evil (*John* 17:9-19); for temporal good (*Romans* 8:28; *Matthew* 6:32-33); and for all other blessings that are enjoyed (*Luke* 23:34; *John* 16:23).

¹²*John* 11:35; *Matthew* 23:37-39.

of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."¹³

(1) Christ an
Advocate for the
Believer
1 John 2:1-2

That is the exalted conclusion which the Scriptures always draw, for the standards of Christian life, from the fact that Christ is constantly exercising His Priestly offices in behalf of Christians. John has stated this truth in these words: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous: and He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."¹⁴

There can be no honest doubt about the intent of such words of God. They never at all encourage sin. On the contrary, they fully honor the right standards of life, and insist upon those standards. But in such words there is seen also the place for the constant functioning of the Priesthood of Christ. God has never encouraged sin. Far from that always. But He has given an ample encouragement for faith and persistent effort. This He has given to those who seem to be facing defeat of honest efforts. They have hope: for they "have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous." He sits at the right hand of God, where "He ever liveth to make intercession for us."¹⁵

The Christian needs Christ every day. But what of the sinner? Can he dispense with Christ? Hardly. "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the House of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" "How shall (they) escape, if (they) neglect so great salvation?" "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life *through Jesus Christ our Lord.*"

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other

¹³Hebrews 4:14-16. See also Hebrews 10:23-36.

¹⁴John 2:1-12.

¹⁵With God, truth and rightness alone count. Abraham recognized this truth when he, praying for Sodom, said, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Genesis 18:25). Jesus used this truth as an argument in His own High Priestly Prayer, when He urged His petition upon the "Righteous Father." (John 17:25). There is a basis here for powerful assurance in the fact that the Advocate is "Jesus Christ the Righteous." Moral harmony insures for Him a hearing from the Father,

Name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

"The wages of sin is death." Under this truth, except for the help of Christ, there is no escape. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." That is God's law of sin and death. Before that law, reasonable men must ask, "If Thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?" Sin is fearfully common. "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God."¹⁶ Before such a searching category of sins, an awakened soul can, in its own strength, only sink down in moral despair.

When a man honestly measures himself by God's laws of life, and God's tests of righteousness, the necessity for Christ at once appears. Immediately there is a felt-need for the Grace of God. Man must have repentance and forgiveness. Man must have faith and the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Man must have intercession and divine mercy. The Lord has said that sinful, worldly, unbelieving men "shall die in (their) sins." From this law of Sin and Death there is but one appeal. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." The man who is without Christ is also without God, and without hope in the world. Feeling that, the honest, thinking soul cries out for the Mercy of God through Jesus Christ."

But God has provided a Plan of Life. "Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures." "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near." "Him that cometh unto Me,

¹⁶Galatians 5:19-21. For other similar catalogues of sins, see *1. Corinthians* 6:9-10; *Ephesians* 5:3-5; *1. Timothy* 1:8-11; *Titus* 3:1-3; *Revelation* 21:8. See also *Ezekiel* 18:4, 20.

¹⁷See *John* 8:23-24; *Mark* 16:16; *Ephesians* 2:12; *Acts* 2:37.

I will in no wise cast out." "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock." "I am the Door," said the Son of God. "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life."¹⁸

In Christ is man's only escape from sin, and his only hope of salvation. Christ, the High Priest, can secure pardon by His intercession at the Throne of God. Christ is the only Way to God, the Truth of Life, and the Source of Life. It is *life eternal* to know God, and Jesus Christ, Whom God has sent.

**d. Man's Only Help
and Hope in Jesus
Christ**

"Being justified by His grace, we (are) made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." That is the only Gospel of Hope for a lost world. "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord," said Paul, speaking for the entire Gospel ministry, "we persuade men . . . as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." Christ as Priest urges men to be saved, and helps them to be saved by His Mediation at the Throne of God.¹⁹

3. *Christ the King.* To-day Christ is King. He is a Divine King. He sits at the right hand of His Father on the Throne of

**"Thou Hast Put All
Things in Subjection
under His Feet"
Hebrews 2:5-13
1 Cor. 15:24-28
Philippians 2:9-11**

God. Being Divine in His Nature, Christ shares in the sovereign authority of God as God. But Christ is King in another sense. Being the Son of God, and therefore King by Divine appointment, Christ has had definitely delegated to Him all power and all authority as the Mediatorial King of the Universe. Jesus Christ, by direct and special appointment of God the Father, rules the world to-day.

Christ has been King at least since the time that sin entered into the world, and there was need of salvation. In a very special sense Christ has been King since His Ascension to His Father's Throne after the Resurrection. Christ rules with like authority to-day in the material world, the moral world, and the spiritual world. He exercises His authority, and accomplishes His purposes, providentially and judicially in each of these spheres. He manifests His Kingship in power, in grace, and in glory.

Christ has a Kingdom *in the world*. That is His Church, which is variously called the "Kingdom of God," the "Kingdom of Christ," or the "Kingdom of Heaven," according as one is

¹⁸See 1. Corinthians 15:3; Romans 6:23; John 3:36; Isaiah 1:18; Isaiah 55:6; John 6:37; Revelation 3:20; John 10:9; 14:6.
¹⁹See John 17:3; Titus 3:4-7; 2. Corinthians 5:11, 20.

thinking of its origin, its immediate Ruler, or its character and culmination. This is that Kingdom which Christ organized while He was on earth. This Kingdom in the world

**(1) Christ's
Kingdom in the
World**

See Note 20 below

This Kingdom, in its deepest integrity, is a thing of the spirit. This real Kingdom will reach its glorified consummation in Heaven. In its visible, militant form, Christ's Kingdom is working for the salvation of the world. Above its deeper spiritual organization, Christ appears, from different points of view, to sit upon a Throne of Glory, or a Throne of Grace, or a Throne of Judgment.

Christ's Kingdom, in its earthly aspect, is composed of those who believe in Christ and have been made citizens, through faith and baptism, of His visible Kingdom. This Kingdom, in as far as faith and life are true to Christ, is a spiritual Kingdom also in the heart. Over this Kingdom Christ exercises a constant providential care, and dispenses His goodness from day to day. Christ also controls His Kingdom by the indwelling power of His Holy Spirit, who sanctifies individual life, and guides effectively in the organization and administration of the Church in all of its work in the world.

Citizenship in Christ's Kingdom is an eternal privilege. It involves also great and grave responsibilities. The Kingdom of Christ in the world is not a luxury: it is an organization and instrument for work. The Kingdom must glorify its King by helping to save and bless the world. Therefore the citizens of the Kingdom must know the Will and Law of their King, and do it loyally. They must propagate His Truth, by life, by word, by material support, so as to extend the boundary lines of the Kingdom through the results of faith in other hearts and in other peoples. They must organize and conserve and direct, through the ordinances, disciplines, and other functions of the Church, the spiritual Kingdom itself in all hearts, old and new, to the glory of Christ the King. These things define, in part, the province of Christ's Kingdom in the world.

**(2) Christ's
Kingdom Over the
World**

But let no man be deceived at this point. Christ has also a Kingship *over* the world, over the whole universe, in fact. Of this truth there can be no doubt. Christ Himself said, as a guarantee to the Church, "All power is given unto

²⁰See *Matthew* 9:35; 13:19, 43; 26:29; *Luke* 12:32; *John* 18:36; *Colossians* 1:13; *1. Thessalonians* 2:12; *2. Thessalonians* 1:5; *James* 2:5; *2. Peter* 1:11; *Revelation* 11:15; 3:21; 21:5, 22, 23; *Ephesians* 1:20-23; 5:5; *Romans* 8:28; *2. Corinthians* 5:10.

Me in Heaven and in Earth." His sovereign control of the many situations that arose during His Trials and Crucifixion are positive proof that He did have the power which He claimed.

All things in the material, moral, and spiritual worlds, have been put under the Kingship of Christ. There is not a law of Nature that is not under His authority. When He was on earth He suspended the operation of such laws, and directed their operations, at His own will. He always caused such laws to work together for good to them who were in line with the love and purposes of God.

There is not a moral act in the lives of men which can escape Christ's Throne of righteous judgment. "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." So said the Lord Jesus Himself. Paul has said, that "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." And again, "We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ." This means not only Christians, who gladly acknowledge Christ's authority, but also unbelievers and wicked men, who would like to escape His authority if they could. But there is not an individual, however high or lowly, however sincere or hypocritical, however good or bad, but must in some way, sooner or later, acknowledge the sovereign authority of Jesus Christ.²¹

Christ is likewise King in the Spiritual world. In Heaven, He sits on the Throne, at the right hand of His Father. All the angels, and principalities, and powers, are subject to His will, and serve Him. His Kingdom is opposed to the unseen, but powerful Kingdom of Satan in the world. Christ's Law is Truth, His laws the wisdom of life to the souls of men. He instructs, commands, defends, and directs men. Providentially, He sends His goodness upon the just and the unjust. He gives truth to guide, and grace to strengthen for service. He sends His Holy Spirit to plead with men, and to dwell within those who will allow the Lord an entrance into their lives. He saves men, and builds them up into Christ-likeness. He organizes, uses, and enriches the forces of righteousness, and will ultimately separate the righteous from the wicked in the consummation of His Kingdom in the spiritual world.

Two problems of responsibility for confessing Christ arise at this point. The one is institutional. The other is individual.

²¹See John 5:22-23; 2. Corinthians 5:10; Romans 14:10; Matthew 25:31-46; 2. Thessalonians 1:7-10. Compare also Daniel 7:13-14; Matthew 11:27; Luke 1:32-33; 10:22; John 3:35; 13:3; 17:1-5; Romans 14:9; Philippians 2:9-11; 1. Peter 3:22; Revelation 6:12-17; 17:14; 22:7-20.

Both have reference to the right confession of Christ, such as will bring men into the Kingdom of Christ, and into proper allegiance to Christ the King. The Church, in all

2. Two

**Responsibilities for
Confessing Christ
the King**

Matthew 10:32-33

Mark 8:34-38

Luke 12:8-10

Romans 10:9-11

of its attitudes and efforts, should make it easy for men to find Christ, to confess Him, and to become identified with His Kingdom. This should be done, not by letting down the standards, but by the sympathetic help which the Church should always give to those who are seeking after the Savior. That obligation rests upon the working

Church as an institution.

But the responsibility for confessing Christ rest heavily also upon the individual. Every man must, at the last, accept Christ, and himself bow in allegiance to Christ's love and authority. The Church may go to a man, and the Lord Jesus Himself may even stand at the door and knock; but the man himself must make the response. He must decide in what manner he will acknowledge the sovereign Kingship of Christ. "Shall I accept Him now as my Lord and Savior, or shall I be forced to stand before Him as a Judge Who will dismiss me for ever from His presence, and from all hope?" That question every man must decide for himself; and that question all men are deciding every day they live.

II. Christ's Personal Administration Within the Early Church

The position and authority of Christ in Heaven to-day have already been described in the previous section of this chapter.

**Progress of Christ's
Kingdom at Home
and Abroad**
Acts 1:8

These functions of His royal administration Christ began to exercise in the life and progress of the Christian Church immediately after His Ascension. Before leaving this world, Christ laid out a world-wide program for His Kingdom. He began then also to direct the execution of that program. He provided for a powerful word of testimony for the witnesses to His truth. He also called apart, and consecrated in a special way, certain human personalities as a medium of contact between His Kingdom and the unsaved world. He promised His Spirit as the source of this power and this consecration. The administrative work thus begun Christ has continued, directing, from His Throne in Heaven, both the Home Mission work and the Foreign Mission work of His Kingdom in this world.

1. *Christ's Administration of Home Mission Work in the Early Christian Church.* The Gospel of Christ is carried forward

**Pentecost and After:
Gospel in Jerusalem
and in All Judea
Acts, Chapters 1 to 5**

by the Truth of Christ, and by consecrated Personality that embodies His Truth, being brought into contact with the lives of men.

The essential and distinguishing character of Home Mission work, as opposed to Foreign Mission work, lies in this fact. In Home Missions, the use of these instrumentalities is direct and immediate from the whole Church;²² whereas, in Foreign Missions, as explained more fully below, the Home Church must work at long range and through an intermediate representation. In Home Missions, the consecrated power of an entire Christian community might be brought to bear upon an unbeliever in that community. Home Missions radiate by this direct contact.

Direct contact with the unsaved, and personal testimony of the whole Christian community characterize Home Missions.

**1. Christ's Command
of Home Missions
Forces**

Comparatively little organized machinery should be necessary, if every member of the Church did his full duty. The equipment, however, for this work is very definite. Three

things are required. In order to the radiation of God's grace, the Christian must have a saving faith in Christ, a working knowledge of the Truth of Life, and a gift of the Spirit that consecrates and makes powerful. These forces of the Home Mission fields are under the direct command of Christ.

Before His Ascension, Christ took His sovereign position as Head of the Church, and began at once to command what should be done by the Church. The Apostles had saving faith. They had also, from long contact with Christ, a first hand knowledge of the truth. They needed yet, in larger measure, the Spirit of consecration and power. They needed also that seasoning acknowledgment of Christ's authority over the Church which they had from waiting, in obedience to His command, for ten days in prayer before He sent the promised Spirit of Power for their work. That was an important truth, which the Lord taught in an effective manner.

Why did not the Risen and Ascended Lord re-appear at Pentecost? Such an appearance was unnecessary. Christ had already, before His Ascension, taken His place visibly at the Head of the Church and its work. He needed only to fulfill His sovereign

²²Home Missions, as here used, includes all evangelistic, educational, and extension work of the Church in its Home Field.

promise in sending the Holy Spirit, and then allow the Apostles to go forward with the word, in obedience to His divine commands already given.

2. No Appearance of Christ in Person at Pentecost This they did, after He had sent the Spirit. In obedience to His command, they launched the great Home Mission work of the Church of Christ. In that great enterprise, Peter and others gave full acknowledgment to the sovereign power of Christ in this work; and they all give Him the glory for the results. The whole story of Pentecost, and of what followed, is highly instructive. But the purpose here does not lead into the details of that great occasion. There is no aspect of Pentecost more significant than that which shows the Risen Lord to be the sovereign administrative Head of the Home Mission work of the Christian Church.

2. Christ's Administration of Foreign Mission Work in the Early Christian Church. With surprising quickness, as if to show how close together in His mind were the thoughts of Home and Foreign Missions, Christ forced, in a sovereign way, the Foreign Missionary program of His Kingdom upon the Early Church. He sent a special endowment of His Spirit into the heart of Stephen. That was a determining act: for about this man, thus endowed, circumstances soon took such shape as to inaugurate of necessity the Foreign Mission work of the Church. This work also uses the instruments of truth and consecrated personality, but with a distinguishing difference now to be described.

World-Wide Evangelization: Gospel in Samaria, and unto All the World
Acts, Chapters 6 to 28

The distinctive fact about Foreign Mission work is the element of organization necessary in order that the Church may make an effective long distance contact with the unsaved. Machinery becomes a necessity. The Church at Home must be organized into many particular departmental activities so as to bring the truth of Christ, and the consecrated life of the Kingdom, into touch with new classes of people, who live in other lands, speak other languages, think other thoughts, direct their lives by other social ideas, and worship other gods.

The problem of the Church at Home is to *project itself* into the Foreign field, and then to *touch the unsaved* in that field. These two effects call for two lines of preparation. The Church

Organization the Distinguishing Feature of Foreign Mission Work

must be spiritually prepared from within. The world must be providentially prepared from without. Foreign Mission work calls, therefore, for the exercise of Christ's sovereign power inside of the Church, and also over the world outside of the Church. Both the Church and the world require organization. From the point of view of these requirements, the *Book of Acts*, Chapters 6 to 28, exhibits the personal and providential administration of Christ, in the Church and over the world, as it was directed toward the progress of His Kingdom into all the world.

There was a Divine preparation of the world for the coming and the progress of Christ's Kingdom. God's program of external organization was foreseen and described by several of the ancient prophets. History is not an accident. "The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will." God had then, and still has, a purpose in His control over history. That purpose, as explained by Paul

**1. Organization of
the World Outside
of the Kingdom of
Christ**
Daniel 4:17, 25, 32
Acts 17:26-27

to the Athenians in his sermon on Mars Hill, is "that (all men) should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us." This larger purpose of God, as Paul went on to emphasize, had direct reference to the recognition of Christ and of His Kingdom in the world. For the progress of that Kingdom of His Son God prepared, with equal effectiveness, both the Gentile and the Jewish worlds.

Jehovah's purpose, as announced in the ancient Prophets, was to establish the Kingdom of Christ in the midst of the Graeco-Roman world. For that purpose the Lord had that world-wide kingdom well organized in preparation for the rapid progress of Christ's Kingdom in its expansion from Jerusalem into all the world. The political world was then under one strong central government; and Roman citizenship was a positive asset to the Church at times in the forward movements of Christ's Kingdom. The world, generally speaking, understood the Greek language; so that the missionaries of the Cross could pass rapidly through all countries, proclaiming the Gospel of the Risen Lord and Savior.

Roman power, enterprise, and supervision had made travel easy, common, and comparatively safe; so that the heralds of the Cross had ready access to "all the nations of the earth." Greek

**(1) Graeco-Roman
World Organized**
Daniel 2:36-45
Ezekiel 25-48
Jeremiah 1-46
Isaiah 51-66
Psalm 2:1-12

and Roman Art and ideals were known everywhere; so that there was a common ground of thought and emotional appeal for the Truth of Christ in the mind and heart of every people. There were scattered Jews, with their synagogues, who furnished an open door at least for a first hearing of the Good News of Christ in every city. There was universal peace; and the world seemed to wait with calm expectation for some great word to be spoken. These conditions were not accidental. God had prepared the Gentile world for the Gospel of Life, and for the Kingdom of Christ.

For the advancement of Christ's Kingdom, God had organized the Gentile world. For the same purpose, He disorganized the Jewish Nation and national life. The plan of God was to scatter the Jews, so that three larger results to them and to the world might follow. The Jewish Nation, as an organized Judaism, was an immediate hindrance to the advancement of Christ's Kingdom. This hindrance had to be removed. The Jews themselves, when scattered throughout the world, were an appointed means of progress to the Kingdom of Christ. The Jews are appointed ultimately to come into the Kingdom of Christ. God has intended that this ingathering of Israel to Christ, in its evidential character, shall be a world-wide event.

The disorganization of Jewish Nationalism was effected in and through the Fall of Jerusalem, which Christ had foretold in detail. But this national calamity did not take place until after the organized opposition of the scribes and the Pharisees, working from their national center in Jerusalem, had brought about two ironic results. Through the persecution of Stephen by the rulers of the Jews, the leaders of Christ's Kingdom were compelled, providentially, to turn their eyes away from Jerusalem, and to look toward foreign lands. The immediate results were a new vision, and a world-wide effort, on the part of the Church. Through the persistent opposition of the scribes and the Pharisees, men were forced to see that Judaism had forsaken the ancient covenants of Jehovah. The effect of this fact was a great clarifying and organizing of men's thoughts respecting the Nature of Christ, and the integrity of His Kingdom in the world.

There are volumes of history summarized in the above statements, which are full of interest in every detail. But the present study must be limited to these general statements, which have

(2) Jewish
Nationalism
Disorganized
Luke 17:20—18:8
Matthew 23:1-37,
and 24:1—25:46
Mark 13:1-37
Luke 21:5-36
Acts 6:1—8:4
Romans 9, 10, 11

pointed out the great historical movements that were profoundly related to the progress of Christ's Kingdom into all the world. Under the sovereign supervision of God, direct and providential, over milleniums of history, the Gentile world was organized in preparation for the Coming of Christ, and the Jewish Nation was both organized and disorganized for the same purpose, that the Kingdom of Christ might have an easier access to the minds of men, and an easier entrance into their hearts in all the nations of the world.

The Lord effectively prepared the external world for the progress of His Kingdom into all the nations of the earth. The Lord also re-organized the inner thought of the

2. Organization of the Inner Thought of the Kingdom
See Note 23 below

Early Church in preparation for the international program of His Kingdom. The Apostles, and most of the other earliest Christians, were Jews. For centuries, their Race had been schooled in provincial thinking, and in an excluding attitude toward the outside world. The mind of these first disciples of Christ, noble as they were from the beginning, needed expansion, and some of their thoughts needed to be entirely recast, in terms of the new world-wide program of Christ's Kingdom which they were about to undertake. Therefore, before this program began (or more exactly, while it was beginning), the Lord Jesus expanded, elevated, and organized the inner thought of the Church for the great work to which it had been called.

In making this preparation, Christ began at the first important truth. He clarified and established the thought of the Church respecting the triumphant unity of His Kingdom. He taught men that the *Here* and the *Hereafter* of His Kingdom were but two aspects of the same thing, if men's faith and life were genuine. The Kingdom is present and militant: it is also triumphant and eternal. Dedication to the program of the Kingdom is required of every citizen. Faithfulness cannot fail. Devotion unto death in the service of Christ only means a transition from one state of the Kingdom to the other, a passage from the militant to the triumphant, from earth to Heaven.²³

This truth was set before the Early Church in the Twelfth Appearance of the Risen (and now Ascended) Lord. This Appearance was that in which the Lord Jesus appeared in Heaven

²³See *Genesis* 12:2-3; *Galatians* 2:1-3:29; *Acts* 1:8; *Matthew* 28:19-20; *John* 3:16; *Acts* 3:19-26; 13:38-50; *Romans*, Chapters 1 to 3, especially 1:13-17, and 3:20-31; and all of *Acts*, 6 to 28, inclusive.

²⁴See Chapter XIV, page 331.

to Stephen, the first martyr to the Faith, at the time of his death. Shortly before this event, Stephen had been called by the Early Church to become a deacon, since he was

Twelfth Appearance:
to Stephen the
First Martyr
Acts 6:1—7:60

especially well qualified for that office, as was then thought, by his wisdom, his reputation for honesty, his faith in Christ, and his gifts of the Holy Spirit. Having entered upon that office, he soon felt moved to proclaim the Gospel. In a clear historical outline Stephen set forth, before the Jews, the unfolding of God's Plan of Salvation, whereby He had brought His Son into the world as the Savior. Continuing his discourse, Stephen next laid upon the rulers of the Jews a heavy charge of guilt for their evil treatment of the Son of God, Whom they had put to death on the Cross. Stephen, as Peter had previously done,²⁵ would probably have next offered repentance and the mercy of God to the murderers of Jesus.

But they would hear him no further. Because of this charge, before he had completed his discourse, the Jews rushed upon Stephen, and stoned him to death. "But he,

a. Manner of This Appearance

being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into Heaven, and saw the Glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, 'Behold, I see the Heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God.' " It was at this point that the Jews, being enraged by this speech of Stephen, rushed upon him, and cast him out of their city, and stoned him to death. But Stephen, kneeling in a dying prayer, like that of his Lord on the Cross, cried with a loud voice to God, and said, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." And when he had thus prayed, as the records state, "he fell asleep."²⁶

Thus Christ appeared for the Twelfth time after His Resurrection. He appeared in Person on this occasion because a new crisis

b. Reasons for This Appearance

had arisen in the development of His Kingdom. By force of circumstances, the great Foreign Missionary program of the Church was being launched. Christ desired to place Himself *visibly*

²⁵See Acts 3:12-26.

²⁶Saul of Tarsus, then a young, ambitious Pharisee, had a commanding part in this death of Stephen (Acts 7:58; 8:1). He was being used, in his wrath against the Christians, as a means of driving them away from Jerusalem. He thus helped to launch the great missionary program of the Kingdom of Christ. Paul's activities on this occasion argue that he was probably present on some other great occasions, as at Pentecost, and at the previous great popular Eighth Appearance in Galilee, and at the Jewish Court when Peter gave the address referred to in the last Note above. On such occasions Saul of Tarsus may have seen and heard things the meaning of which came to him, after his conversion, with fullness and power. Cf. Acts 22:19-20.

at the head of this new and larger movement of the Kingdom. That was one thing that stood out with emphasis on this occasion.

Another thing was this. This new movement meant an enlarged conflict. It meant that Christ's Kingdom of Truth and Righteousness would be set in opposition to the organized Error and Evil of the whole world. Therefore this larger missionary enterprise of the Church meant multiplied oppositions, sacrifices, and temptations to apostasy; and, as later events proved, it meant in many cases persecutions and death.

But Christ, on this occasion, showed Himself as equal to any need of the Church in the new work now being forced upon the Kingdom. Christ appeared *visibly* at the Throne of God, as Lord and King, able to command, guide, and empower for the work. Christ further showed Himself as divinely able to care for those who might give their lives to open the way for His Kingdom. He *stood* by the Throne of God, as if He had arisen, in the alertness of His interest, to receive the ascending spirit of the martyred Stephen. Thus Christ showed Himself both able and ready, when necessary, to translate His own faithful followers from one sphere of His Kingdom to the other.

Such care commands a confidence that causes men not to fear death in the service of Christ's Kingdom. Christ, the Divine King and Head of the Church, as seen on this occasion, is consistently superior to all of those providential circumstances by which the world lends itself, sometimes even unwillingly, to the purposes of God. This Twelfth Appearance gave a new vision of the triumphant unity of the Kingdom of Christ: a vision that should give confidence and courage to the Church, and inspire faithfulness at any price to the new missionary program of the Kingdom of Christ in its efforts to bless all the world.

Christ further clarified the thought of the Early Church respecting the ripeness of the Foreign Fields for the harvestings of the Gospel. The waiting world was ready for the Kingdom of Christ. This He showed by the results that came from the personal labours of Philip, another one of the first seven deacons, who also felt an early call to the larger work of preaching the Gospel.

(2) Ripeness of
Foreign Fields:
Mission Work in
Samaria
Acts 8:1-40

Soon after the death of Stephen, Philip went down to Samaria, and preached Christ in that city. There he found a great community who heard the Word with gladness. The results attracted wide attention, the report even reaching the Apostles at Jerusa-

lem. After many were saved in this city, in obedience to divine call, Philip went southward to a desert place near Gaza, and presented Christ to the Treasurer of Ethiopia, who was returning from Jerusalem to the Court of Candace in that country. In the city of Samaria, the Church was shown the enthusiastic response of the masses to the Gospel of Christ. In the case of the Ethiopian Treasurer, the Church was permitted to see into the earnest mind of an honest pagan who was ready to learn the way of faith and life through Jesus Christ. In both of these instances of missionary work, the Church saw how ripe the world was for the Gospel of the Kingdom.

There was no need that Christ should appear in person in connection with the revelation of this truth. The work done was essentially personal on the part of Philip. The methods employed lay between those of Home Mission and Foreign Mission work. The entire enterprise, at least so in Samaria, was only an overflow of Pentecost into a half-Gentile country. But the results showed, as they were designed to show, the ripeness of the Foreign Mission Fields, the doors that were open to the Kingdom of Christ, and the possibilities of redeemed lives and the power of Christ in the Gentile world.

The waiting world was ready for Christ. Was God Himself ready for the Foreign Mission work of the Church? Yes, as Christ clearly demonstrated to the Apostles, and to the Early Church generally, in and through the Vision of Peter at Joppa. The Vision was personal to Peter; but its lesson was intended for all the Early Church, which was as yet composed mainly of Jews.

**(3) Readiness of God
for Foreign Mission
Work: Peter's
Vision
Acts 10:1—11:30**

God gave His Son to save the world; and God was ready for this Divine Purpose to become internationally effective. The Lord sent this Vision to Peter to teach this Will of God. Through the instruction of Peter's mind on this occasion, the Lord changed and vitalized the entire mental, emotional, and spiritual attitude of the Early (Jewish) Church toward the unsaved Gentile world, for whom, as well as for the Jews, Jesus Christ had died on the Cross.

That was the central purpose of the Vision at Joppa, as it was enacted before Peter, and as it was later explained by him to the assembly of the Church. The Apostles accepted the lesson as coming from the King and Head of the Church. They felt then, and the reader of this event feels now, that Christ was, through this Vision, directing the larger work of His Kingdom; and that

He was in this way organizing the thought of the Church for its program of Foreign Missions in all the world.²⁷

Finally, Christ, in a sovereign way, organized the machinery for conducting the Foreign Mission work of the Early Church.

3. Organization of the Foreign Mission Forces of the Church

Visibly again, Christ placed Himself at the Head of the Foreign Mission Forces of the Church for all time. This He did in His two appearances to Paul, who was expressly called for leadership in the world-wide advancement of Christ's Kingdom among the Gentiles. In this sovereign way, Christ appeared to Paul first for his conversion, and later for his special preparation for this great international missionary enterprise.

The first appearance to Paul was that on the Damascus Road. This Thirteenth Appearance of the Risen Lord was the most royal of all His appearances,—a fact that well befitted the supreme moment of that great occasion. Christ appeared at this time in the ineffable splendor of Heaven's Eternal King, the Son of God, with a brightness of glory which human eyes could not endure. Christ appeared here with the full prerogative of a Divine Judge, challenging Paul to answer for his past course of life. Christ appeared here as a Divine Savior, calling Paul out of death into life, and claiming him for His own. Christ appeared here as a Divine King, announcing a sovereign purpose in Paul's life, setting him apart to a world-task, and commanding him exactly what he should do at that time.

The Fourteenth Appearance of Christ was also to Paul. This occurred while he was praying in the Temple, soon after his conversion. Both of these appearances were necessary, the one for conversion, the other for direct instruction. It was required that an Apostle should have had a personal and experimental knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. In these Appearances, and in other possible manifestations of Himself to Paul, the Lord Jesus, by direct revelation, provided for this requirement in the case of this new Apostle to the Gentiles.²⁸

Fourteenth Appearance: to Paul While Praying in the Temple

**Acts 22:17-21;
26:16, 21.**

necessary, the one for conversion, the other for direct instruction. It was required that an Apostle should have had a personal and experimental knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. In these Appearances, and in other possible manifestations of Himself to Paul,

²⁷The thought of the Early Church relative to Foreign Mission work was further clarified, from another point of view, in the Church Council at Jerusalem, as recorded in *Acts 15:1-35*, and as alluded to by Paul in *Galatians 2:1-3:29*.

²⁸See *Mark 3:14*; *Acts 1:21-22*; *John 1:14*; *1. John 1:1-3*; *Acts 9:21-30*; *Galatians 1:11-2:14*; *2. Corinthians 12:1-12*; and *Ephesians 3:1-21*.

This later Appearance to Paul in the Temple He seems to have regarded as the culminating experience in his preparation for the Gospel witness. It was there, as Paul later declared, that Christ had given him his commission, saying, "Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles." Thus the Lord revealed His sovereign control of the Foreign Mission work of the world: it was His work. Thus He also laid a sovereign hand upon Paul, and set him apart, in heart and life, to the task of evangelizing the Gentile world. This calling of the great Leader of the Church in this work was the beginning of organized Foreign Mission work in the Kingdom of Christ.

From this beginning, one might follow the development of the organized missionary forces, and the progress of Mission work in many lands, as represented in the Sacred Scriptures. At all times the reader will find the Lord Jesus Christ exercising a kingly administration over the advancing work of the Early Church on Foreign Fields. Through His Spirit, Christ called the first group of Foreign Missionaries, and set them apart to their work (*Acts 13*). Through His Spirit, Christ also directed the work that the Missionaries carried forward. He met and answered effectively the three great problems of that work. He told the Church where to go. He counselled the workers in right ways of adjusting the Gospel requirements to a Gentile life that was ignorant of Israel's traditions. He helped the Church and her workers to meet all organized opposition to the work of the Lord. In all of this work, Christ was, and is, in supreme command, the King within His own Kingdom, and the King over all the world.

In His sovereign authority, Christ utilizes the activities of both friend and foe, at times making even the wrath of man to work the praises of God. But in the actual propagation of His Kingdom in the hearts of men, Christ does not work beyond the responses of men to the call of God upon their lives. His Kingdom, as a rule, advances by contagion. It springs from the point of contact between hearts that have it and those that have it not.

Grace and life result from the blessing of Christ upon the consecrated touch of human spirit with human spirit. Thus the Holy Spirit works; and thus Christ works in saving and blessing men and nations. The contact of love, and life, and living truth, must be made, directly and personally by the Church at Home, and by a projection of the Church into Foreign Fields. For this

**Christ's Sovereign
Control of Mission
Forces and Mission
Work**
Acts 13-28

**Christ's Methods
and Extent of Work**

purpose, Christ, in His love and sovereign authority, has always supervised and controlled those aspects of organization, both within and without His Kingdom, which have been necessary for an effective contact, at Home and at long range, between the Word and life of the Home Church and the hearts of the unsaved in Home and Foreign Fields. This He has done, in addition to providing salvation at the expense of His own Life on the Cross. Verily, Christ has done, and is doing, His part to save the world. The burden of eternal life and death now rests upon the hearts of men.

III. Christ's Culminating Administration in the World

The Son of God is Lord and King over all things. From His Throne in Heaven He is daily bringing His Kingdom to a culmination in this world. His triumph is cer-

"Christ . . . Set . . . Far above All Principality, and Power, and Might, and Dominion, and Every Name That Is Named"
Ephesians 1:17-23
Cf. Daniel 7:13-14

tain. But resistance and conflict in the meantime are equally certain. The spirit of the world is essentially opposed to the work and Kingdom of Christ; and that spirit of evil will not readily give up its place and power in the world and over the lives of men. The Kingship of Christ will have at last a universal acknowledgment; but for the present His Kingdom advances by conquest.

The final triumph of universal acknowledgment is one thing: the present conquest is another. The battle-line of the Kingdom as drawn to-day presents two fronts. The one front faces the evil world that is opposed to the Kingdom of Christ. The other front is drawn through the secret of the individual heart. On the first front the Holy Spirit, using the Truth of God, strives to subdue men into a confession of Christ as Savior and King. Every soul thus brought into the Kingdom of Christ must be won from the Kingdom of Darkness and Death, and won against the forces of ignorance and sin. On the second front the Indwelling Spirit of God, using His Truth, is striving to sanctify the lives of men, and thus to elevate them into complete obedience to Christ's laws of love and righteousness.

Together these two efforts of Christ, to win souls into confession, and to sanctify them into Christ-likeness, constitute the Moral Conflict of His Kingdom in the world. With this Moral Conflict, and with the Final Triumph of His Kingship, the last two appearances of the Lord Jesus Christ are directly concerned.

The first of these two appearances has already past: the second is yet to come.

I. The Moral Conflict of Christ in the World. The Moral Conflict of His Kingdom in the world was the central interest

Fifteenth

Appearance: to John
on the Isle of
Patmos

Revelation 1:9-20

of the Lord Jesus in His Fifteenth Appearance after His Resurrection. This Appearance was the Lord's glorified manifestation of Himself to the Apostle John on the Isle of Patmos. This Appearance, which is logically the last until the end of Time, serves as an introduction to the *Book of Revelation*, which deals primarily with Christ and His Kingdom. The central theme of that great Vision is Christ the King and Savior: His Moral Purpose, His Moral Power, His Moral Glory, and His Moral Triumph. In that great Vision, the Sovereign Love of Christ is seen and felt to be striving for three definite results, which are now to be considered in their order in the Book.

First in this Vision is the conflict and struggle of Christ for purity of thought and practice within the Kingdom. That result

1. Christ's Conflict
for Purity of
Thought and
Practice within His
Kingdom
Revelation 2 and 3

was ever a condition of conquering power in the Kingdom of Christ. A fundamental problem of discipleship is to hold the Truth, and to do the Right; that is, to have a right creed rightly translated into daily life. This problem of the Kingdom was graphically set forth in the Seven Letters to the Seven Churches in Asia, which were given to John during this Fifteenth Appearance of the Risen Lord.

These Letters, as described in the Vision, were dictated by the Lord Himself, Who "was dead, and (is now) alive for evermore." The purpose of these Letters was the same as that in the other New Testament Writings: the multiple record of facts, the doctrinal exposition of the Truth, the fiery denunciation of false teachers and false teaching, and the earnest appeal of Christ for pure and right living. The Lord Jesus was striving to correct men's thoughts, and to secure Christ-likeness in character and conduct. That conflict and effort is still going on. Christ is striving to-day, through His Truth and by His Spirit, for the same leavening results of righteousness that lift men up into perfect allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Further, there is in this Vision an emphasis upon the fact that Christ, as Sovereign King of Righteousness, is engaged in a winning conflict against the powers of Error, and Evil, and

Darkness, in the world. That is the obvious meaning in most of the sweeping chapters of this great Book. In the magnificent

**2. Christ's Conflict
against the World
of Evil
Revelation 4-20**

symbolism of this Vision there is a picture of the uncompromising struggle between Truth and Error, between Good and Evil, between Christ and Satan. The struggle is one of King against King, of Kingdom against Kingdom. But the certain victory is with Christ. He holds a temporary restraint upon the power of evil. He shall finally overthrow the Kingdom of Darkness. He shall ultimately cast Death and Hell into the Lake of Fire, along with all those whose names are "not found written in the Book of Life."

Finally, it is made plain in this Vision, that the Spirit of Love and Life broods over this world of conflict, striving ever, in accord with the sovereign pleasure of Christ, to win the world to a right acknowledgment of the Lord of lords and King of kings. Christ is constantly striving with the spirits of men, and against the enemies of men, that He may win the faith of men, and bring them, redeemed from sin and death, into His Kingdom of life and peace and eternal joy.

That is the grand finale of the Word of God. In words of beauty unparalleled, the Vision of this Book is brought to a close in the last two chapters. The power of appeal is unsurpassed. Almost every argument that has power to move the better heart of man has been brought into the last great appeal of these closing chapters, wherein the gracious Lord Jesus Himself, the Alpha and Omega, offers to all who are "athirst . . . the fountain of the Water of Life freely."

Probably no argument has more moved the human heart to forsake the world of sin and death, and to turn unto the Lord of life and hope, than the last loving, yearning invitation of the Risen Savior, given in this glorified appearance to John on the Isle of Patmos. Summarizing all history and hope in one brief description, the Lord Jesus spoke of Himself as "the Root and the Off-spring of David, the Bright and Morning Star." Then, as a proper sequent to this comprehensive assurance, Christ issued His great final invitation:

THE JESUS OF OUR FATHERS

*And the Spirit and the Bride say,
COME!*

*And let him that heareth say,
COME!*

*And let him that is athirst
COME!*

*And whosoever will, let him
TAKE THE WATER OF LIFE FREELY!*

2. *The Final and Universal Acknowledgment of Christ's Sovereignty.* The Lord Jesus last appeared, as described above, with an offer of life and mercy. That gracious offer still stands; but it will not stand for ever. The Final Appearance of Christ will be for Judgment and for universal recognition of the Son of God as Lord and King over all. The divine offers of mercy will then be closed; and all men of all nations will then have to acknowledge the sovereign authority of Jesus Christ, Who will sit in judgment upon all men, and will separate those within His Kingdom from those who are unwisely on the outside.

Men may reject Christ now, but not always. God has decreed it otherwise. Men must recognize, in some way, the Kingship of Christ. To Him, as a matter of justice for His life and death as Savior, God has guaranteed such acknowledgment. For this reason and purpose, as the Scriptures declare, "God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name which is above every name: that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

There are too many things involved in that decree for any man to hope to escape its application to his own life and destiny. The Day of Acknowledgment has been appointed also. In Heaven to-day, Jesus Christ, Who is busy with the saving ministry of His Kingdom, is awaiting the issue of divinely directed

Sixteenth and Final Appearance: to All the World in the Day of Judgment
Matthew 25:31-46
Acts 17:30-31
1 Thess. 4:13-18
2 Thess. 1:5-12
Jude vv. 14-15
Rev. 22: 10-16

God's Decree That All Shall Acknowledge Christ
Philippians 2:9-11

events which are definitely, perhaps even rapidly, tending toward that great Day when, as a matter of right to Himself, His kingly authority shall be fully acknowledged. This consummation and reward of the Lord's Life-Work is emphasized in the Scriptures. It will be realized to Him in His Final Appearance, when the Son of God shall come, in power and glory, to judge all the world. Then, according to the Scriptures, two things of central interest will happen, and both will be acquiesced in by all intelligences.

The first of these approved events will be the Final Judgment of the world by the Lord Jesus Christ. This judgment no man can escape: "for we shall all stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ." That is God's appointment; and here is Christ's description of the event. "When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the Throne of His Glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left."

The recognition of Christ's Kingship over all in that day will not be questioned. Acknowledgment of His universal sovereignty will be complete. *The King*, as the record emphasizes, sitting upon His Throne of Glory, will pass judgment on the one party, and then on the other. Immediately, with like acknowledgment of His royal authority, both parties shall pass obediently into the places to which He has assigned them. The wicked "shall go away into everlasting punishment:

"But the righteous into life eternal." So shall they be gathered home to Christ, and to His Father. So shall they be received into the Mansions prepared in the Father's House. So shall they be welcomed into the joys of their Lord. So shall they be with Him, where He is, that they may behold His glory. This gathering of His own unto Himself, and the delivering up of His Kingdom unto His Father, that God may be all in all, is to be the glorious consummation of the Life-Work of the Son of God.

So there shall be fulfilled in Jesus Christ, as Savior and as King and Judge, the divine purposes of His humiliation, and death, and exaltation to the right hand of God. And so may

1. Final Judgment of the World

Eccl. 12:13-14

Mark 8:34-38

Romans 14:10

2 Cor. 5:10

Revelation 22:12

2. Christ's Gathering the Righteous Home to Himself

faith in Him bring forgiveness, and life, and love, and power, to those who have believed in their hearts that Jesus Christ is Lord, and have confessed Him publicly before the world.

This then is our testimony to the Jesus of Our Fathers. To know Him aright is everlasting life. To love and serve Him brings deeper knowledge and enriching experience into the soul. To seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness is to have the highest assurance of His ample care in this life, and of entering, after this life, into the pleasures that are with Him for evermore. Therefore let this testimony close with this greatest of all benedictions:

NOW UNTO HIM WHO IS ABLE
TO KEEP YOU FROM FALLING AND
TO PRESENT YOU FAULTLESS
BEFORE THE PRESENCE OF HIS GLORY
WITH EXCEEDING JOY
TO THE ONLY WISE
GOD OUR SAVIOR
BE
GLORY AND MAJESTY, DOMINION AND POWER
BOTH NOW AND EVER. AMEN

INDEXES

THE PARALLEL RECORDS OF THE GOSPELS

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ABBREVIATIONS: d. means daughter; f., father; ff, the following (pages); m., mother; n., near, or note; q.v., *which see*, look up the topic; (q.v.), *which see* for additional references; s., son; (s) added to a word means to take the word as either singular or plural. The same principle applies to such combinations as King(ship), etc.

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